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PREFACE

Of the lectures contained in this volume, two, the first and seventh, formed part of a Course delivered in the Church of All Saints, Margaret Street, at the instance of the Christian Evidence Society, during the Lent of 1905. The others were given at the Church Institute and Club, Marylebone, in a Course arranged by the Society, at the request of the Clergy of the Deanery, in the autumn of that year.

While the subjects of which they treat are of perennial importance, they are among those which are specially discussed at the present day; and it is believed that the academic distinction of the authors, and the freshness of treatment, will render these addresses widely useful to thoughtful people.

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THE IDEA OF GOD

Rev. H. G. Miller, M.A.

"And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, What is thy name, that when thy words come to pass we may do thee honour?

"And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore askest thou after my name, seeing it is wonderful?

"So Manoah took the kid with the meal offering, and offered it upon the rock unto the Lord: and the angel did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on."—Judges xiii. 17–19, R.V.

And this suggests an important distinction to us,—the distinction between God as He is in Himself, and God as He manifests Himself to us in action. There is a great mystery attaching to the name of God. When Jacob asked his strange antagonist, and said: "Tell me, I pray thee, Thy name," He said, "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after My name? And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." It was by blessing that God revealed Himself to Jacob; by doing "wondrously" that he revealed Himself to Manoah. To neither did He tell His name, nor could He tell it, for man was not able to receive it. To know God's name would be to know Him as He is in Himself,—to have exhausted the conception of Godhead.

Now God we may know, but not in equal sense

the Godhead. God is Deity conceived in relation, conceived as the cause or ground, the law and end of the universe,—Deity as He is to and for the universe, in His outward functions and relations [1], a unity over against the manifold of finite existence; but the Godhead is Deity conceived according to His own nature, as He is from within and for Himself. God is the Godhead in action, within the sphere of the conditioned and related: the Godhead is God in the region of transcendental existence. God is an object of natural knowledge,—i. e., He can be known from His works, or by a process of regressive and analytical thought; but the Godhead is a subject of supernatural revelation,—i. e., can be known only as a man is, in a sense, taken into the secrets of the Divine Nature. By the light of nature we may verify the fact *that* God is, but *what* He is we can know only as He makes Himself known.

I say that by the light of nature we may *verify* that God is: I do not say may *prove* it. This point I desire to emphasize.

The idea of God can be derived neither from the evidence of the senses, nor from the evidence of reason. Neither sense nor reason can supply to us a knowledge of God. Attempts have been made along various lines, and by various methods, to *prove* the existence of a Divine Being. But all these so-called proofs of the existence of God, whether ontological, cosmological, or teleological, can do absolutely nothing towards originating the idea of God in the mind of one who has it not. The idea of God is

[1] See Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, pp. 385 ff.

postulated by all of them, and they are addressed to that idea as already, in some form, existent in the mind. By none of them, taken singly or taken collectively, could the idea of God be so much as suggested to one whose mind was without it. All that they can claim to be is, that they are attempts to verify, to correct, to extend that idea; but, one and all, they are powerless to create it.

How then does the idea of God originate? It is traced by some to the conscience, by some to the longings of man's heart, by some to the workings of his reason.

(1) It is traced to his conscience. In man's deep sense of sin, and in that fearful looking for of judgement, which is awakened in every unsophisticated mind by conscious moral failure, are found the rudiments of a belief both in a God who judges the thoughts and ways of men, and in a future life in which the righteous judgements of God will be carried out.

But to this it may be surely objected, that it is the idea of God which calls out the fear, for to the God-forgetting it is non-existent. It is the idea of God which calls out the fear, and not the fear which begets the idea.

(2) By some the idea is traced to the presence in the heart of man of a feeling of incompleteness, of weakness, and dependence, as little capable of explanation as the cravings of hunger and thirst in a new-born child. Man knows not whence he comes, nor whither he goes. He looks for a guide, a friend, some one on whom he can rest. In addition to the impressions received

from the outer world, there is in the heart of man a yearning desire for something that shall not come and go like everything else, but shall be before and after and for ever. To this feeling the idea of God is attributed.

But to this the rejoinder is obvious:

> "Fools! that in man's brief term
> He cannot all things view,
> Affords no ground to affirm
> That there are gods who do!
> Nor does being weary prove that he has where to rest.
>
> Fools! that so often here
> Happiness mocks our prayer,
> I think might make us fear
> A like result elsewhere.
> Make us not fly to dreams, but moderate desire."
>
> (M. Arnold, *Empedocles on Etna.*)

Assuredly the existence of a want within does not of itself warrant a belief in the existence of that which will satisfy it; nor is there anything in the feeling of weariness and general dissatisfaction that would suggest any idea of the nature of that which would bring relief. The futility of finite things to satisfy a being capable of the infinite,—and, indeed, the futility of *things* at all to satisfy a person whose deepest craving is for personal fellowship,—may be realized vaguely (as by Alexander weeping for fresh worlds to conquer), without the unsatisfied, insatiable desire suggesting that it is God for whom the soul is athirst; or if we gave the name of God to that Something conceivably existent which would meet us in the depths of our being, it would be to us an absolutely meaningless word. It would be but the name of a possible correlative of the

soul's desire, and we could form not the slightest idea of what the word might connote. The sensation of hunger could suggest bread only to one who had had experience of bread; and so the aching void of a heart in which eternity has been set could suggest God only to one who has had experience of God.

It is not conscience that reveals to us God, though God may reveal Himself to the conscience. And it is not the heart which reveals to us God, though God may reveal Himself to the heart.

(3) And it is the same with the reason. Invincible objections lie against the position that the idea of God is an ultimate deduction of thought. I will not dwell on the high metaphysical arguments by which Kant shook to their very foundations the great arguments which had been used before, but which have been seldom pressed since then, to establish belief in the existence of God,—especially the famous ontological argument, first formulated by Anselm, and restated by Descartes, Leibnitz, Wolff, and Clarke. It is enough to say that the reason which brought to us God, would define God: that God would be interpreted in terms of the reason which found Him, would be clothed in its attributes, and would not transcend its categories; so that He would remain abstract, lifeless, impersonal. Moreover, the idea of God would then only be attainable by a highly intellectual people, capable of co-ordinating thoughts and objects into systems, of referring particular facts to general laws, and general laws to universal principles, till all laws have been comprehended in a

single formula, and all knowledge consummated in the unity of unconditional existence.

But this is altogether contrary to the facts of experience. The idea of God, so far from being confined to the highest, seems one that is germane to the human race. From Homer and Cicero down, stress has justly been laid on the prevalence among all nations of a belief in a superior Being. "All men," says Homer, "yearn after deities" (*Od.* iii. 48). And Cicero's question still holds good: "What people is there, or what race of men, which has not, even without being taught, some presentiment of the existence of deities?" (*N. D.* i. 16). Moreover, all systems of religion have had *positive* notions of the Deity, and reason could never have conducted them to these. Common to all has been the idea, that He is a Being superior to man and nature, and that He controls to some extent man's destiny.

But if the idea of God was really elaborated by man's reason, it was the very crowning act of human intelligence,—it was a triumphant attainment of the ultimate goal of scientific research and philosophic speculation, the reduction of all things to unity, the detection of the One amidst the many. It would have been wanting, of necessity, in the childhood of our race; it would be wanting still to children, to persons unlettered, and to savage tribes,—wanting, i. e., at a time, and among people, and in places, where we know that the idea of the supernatural, the *sensus numinis*, works with the most intense activity.

No, *given the idea of God*, from reason, heart, and conscience may come the verification of the

arguments which, though separately falling short of validity and power to convince us, yet contain elements, each of them, the combination of which must go far to establish us in certainty. Not to be wholly despised are the speculative proofs which may be offered in support of the fundamental beliefs concerning God and the soul; and though the fact that they carry conviction in very unequal degrees to equally sincere and reverent minds must make us cautious in expecting too much from them, this at least must be admitted concerning them, that they furnish powerful aids to faith *for those already religiously disposed.*

I say, for those already religiously disposed, for the idea of God must already have been quickened within them, and it is that which calls for explanation. Behind the idea of God there lies the idea of Godhead; and the idea of Godhead has to be grasped before we can verify the idea of God. It is only in the light of the knowledge, or the belief, or the conviction *that God is,* that we can trace out the law of His working,—i. e., the transcendence of God must be realized before there can be thought of His immanence. Transcendence and immanence may seem hard to be reconciled, but an illustration which has been used may diminish the difficulty. The maker of an instrument must be before it and above it, and that is a relation of transcendence; but he must also be in it,—his mind, or a mind answering to his as regards the use or function of this special thing, must be present and active in order to its being as an instrument, and that is a relation of immanence.

Nothing can be more untrue to the facts of

history than to represent the idea of God as one that has been reached by stages of thought, elaborated slowly by reason,—to represent it as the result of subordinating the world of existence to the methods and forms of intelligence, and establishing in the sea of empirical particulars, in the confused infinitude of the contingent, the universal, the necessary, the all-pervading law. This is utterly disproved by the fact that at no stage of his existence has man been found void of the knowledge of God. This is surely most important, holding, as I think it does, an irrefragable proof of the actual, objective existence of God. The idea of God exists,—has existed for all men, at all times, everywhere,—therefore God exists. That argument, I think, is a cogent one.

That the Theological idea rests on mere logical subreptions and vicious conclusions was proved with great acuteness by Kant in the case of the arguments previously propounded in proof of the existence of God. He maintained that, as every act of cognition is a product of empirical matter and intellectual form, or is founded on the co-operation of sense and understanding, any cognition of things is impossible where the factor of empirical matter is wanting. Knowledge through intellectual notions alone is illusory, inasmuch as, for the notion of the unconditional, which understanding sets up, sense is unable to show the object which should correspond to it. Of the two factors needful to constitute an act of cognition, when one of them is zero, the product must be zero also. This is undeniable. The

question which Kant placed at the head of his entire *Kritik*—How are synthetic judgements possible *a priori*? Can we, *a priori*, by thought alone, extend our knowledge beyond the experience of sense? Is knowledge of the supersensual possible?—must be answered by an unconditional, No. But the assumption is not to be conceded that God cannot be empirically known. Agnosticism assumes a double incompetence,—the incompetence not only of man to know God, but of God to make Himself known. But the denial of competence is the negation of Deity, and it is impossible to assert the non-existence of God; for before one can say that the world is without a God, he that makes this great denial[1] must first have become thoroughly conversant with the whole world. He must have searched through the universe of sun and stars, as well as the history of all ages; he must have wandered through the whole realm of space and time in order to be able to assert with truth, that nowhere has a trace of God been found. He must be acquainted with every force in the universe, for should but one escape him, that one might be God. He must be in absolute possession of all the elements of truth which form the whole body of possible knowledge, for else the one factor which he did not possess might be just the very truth that there is a God. If he does not know, and is not able to explain, everything that has happened in the course of all ages, just the very point which he does not know, or is not able to explain, may involve the instrumentality of God.

[1] Christlieb, *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief*, pp. 143-4.

In short, in order to be able to assert authoritatively that no God exists, a man must be omniscient and omnipresent, i. e. he must himself be God, and himself give the lie to himself.

In view of the fact that the idea of God exists, let us take it as a working hypothesis, that God is a Being capable of revealing Himself to man, and that man is a being capable of receiving that revelation,—capable of apprehending Deity through a faculty that is unknown to, unrecognized by, psychologists. Those familiar with the writings of Max Müller will remember how he insists that, over and above reason and sense, there is a third inlet of knowledge through a faculty which he calls sometimes Faith, sometimes the Faculty of apprehending the Infinite, but which I would prefer to call simply the Spiritual Faculty,—a faculty which, independent of, and even in spite of, sense and reason, enables men, under different names and various disguises, to apprehend the Infinite, not only in religion, but in all things; a power independent of sense and reason,—a power in a certain sense contradicted by sense and reason, but yet a very real power, which has held its own from the beginning of the world, neither sense nor reason being able to overcome it, while it alone is able to overcome both reason and sense; a faculty which imparts to us what is neither furnished by the organs of sense, nor elaborated by our reason, but which nevertheless possesses evidence which altogether outweighs and is superior to that possessed by sense and reason.

The admission may seem dangerous that the

knowledge obtained through the spiritual faculty may contradict that derived from reason and the the senses. But a little reflection will show that in this reason does but stand to faith in the same relation as the senses stand to reason. When reason contradicts the senses, we abide by reason as the higher faculty. And reason often contradicts the senses. The world as scientifically understood to-day is very different from the world as sensibly perceived. Our senses tell us that the earth is stationary, with the heavenly bodies revolving round it. This is contradicted by reason, and after a struggle the conclusion of reason is accepted. There are words which, as regards all our sensual experience, are expressive of ideas purely negative,—names of things which in the sphere of the senses have no existence at all; but which have existence in the sphere of reason. Such a word is "finite". Finitude to the senses is wholly imperceptible, but its conception by the reason is positive and real. And as between reason and the spirit, "infinity" is a word precisely parallel. "Infinite" to the reason is pure negative, but to faith it is most real and positive. The senses and reason and faith, or the spiritual faculty, are three distinct organs of knowledge, and together constitute our cognitive being. Faith is that organ of knowledge by which we apprehend the Infinite; and my contention is that we can and do apprehend the Infinite, and that by a perception as direct as any received through the senses. Every sensitive and thoughtful man, even though he have no formulated religion, is conscious, at least

at times, of a presence which besets him behind and before, and which he cannot evade; a Power, a Spirit behind Nature, behind his own consciousness even, which gives new meaning and scope to his thoughts, new direction to his aims, new depths and heights to his hopes and fears. We are all haunted at times by that sense of an unseen, but all-encompassing Presence[1] to which a psalmist of Israel gave expression: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the

[1] In Joseph Hocking's tale, *A Flame of Fire*, a man, fleeing from the agents of the Inquisition, shaken by the horrors he has witnessed, the ghastly deeds done in the name of Him who took the little children in His arms, and reflecting that half the wars and half the cruelty of the world have been caused by religion, is represented as tempted to throw off all belief in the existence of God, or at least of a God who careth for the sons of men:—

"But as this thought passed through my mind I seemed to feel a presence near me, and looking towards the sky it seemed to me as though I saw an angel's form with a face like my mother's. Then I heard one word, and only one. It reached me not, as I thought, through the ears, neither was it spoken by a human voice. Rather the whole of the valley was filled with it, even though a man might be by my side and never hear it at all. And the word was GOD, though it belonged to no human language, and was spoken rather to the soul than to the mind. As I heard it my fears and my doubts passed away, even as a summer vapour passes away when the sun arises in its strength, and my heart became light with joy. After that there was a great silence again, so great that it seemed to make a great noise."—Chap. xxxii.

night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee."

A sense of this besetting presence is an experience common to most, if not all of us. Who has not felt the joy of a revelation which flesh and blood could never give, the rapture of seeing further than the bodily eye can see, of hearing more than the bodily ear can hear? When we have stood upon the margin of the shore and surveyed far and wide the expanse of waters, and when there has arisen a sense of the boundless, the infinite, the divine, what gave us that sense of the boundless? Not the sea, for the sea was itself finite, and the finite cannot wake the infinite, for the one is a contradiction of the other. It could have come from no material source. Flesh and blood did not reveal it to us. It was a momentary vision which we caught of Him "whose way is in the sea, and His path in the great waters." And what a power lies in music to touch the soul to strange issues! The strong wings of a glorious "song without words" can bear us in rapturous moments into a finer and a freer air, where the faculties of mind and of heart set themselves free from limitations. Compare Milton's *Il Penseroso*.

> There are whose "due feet never fail,
> To tread the studious cloister's pale,
> Who love the high-embowed roof,
> And antic pillars massy proof,
> And storied windows richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light:

There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through the ear,
Dissolve them into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before their eyes."

When we stand to view the great phenomena of nature, we are awakened to a sense of their beauty, or sublimity and grandeur; and in our ordinary moods we may stop short in those ordinary perceptions, the spiritual faculty lying dormant. But we are capable of transcending those moods, and being roused to emotions for the explanation of which the sensible phenomena, as sensible, will be found altogether inadequate. Coleridge, in his *Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni*, thus describes a deep spiritual experience:

"O dread and silent mount! I gazed upon thee
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
I worshipped the Invisible alone.
Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,
Thou the meanwhile wast blending with my thought,
Yea, with my life and life's own secret joy:
Till the dilating soul, enrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing—there
As in her natural form, swelled vast to heaven!"

And Wordsworth gives frequent descriptions of his own similar experience. It was his constant effort to turn men's minds from the artificial to the natural, and, freeing their minds from the fetters of a faulty and pernicious system of ethics and of art, to lead them into the freedom of the broad, clear light of day,

where they might behold, with unveiled eyes and face to face, the surpassing grandeur of external nature; and where, while they gazed, chastened and subdued, they might feel "a sense sublime", a pervading "presence"—

> "A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

Or, as he puts it in his famous *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*:

> "I raise
> The song of thanks and praise
> For all those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,
> Fallings from us, vanishings;
> Blank misgivings of a creature
> Moving about in worlds not realized,
> High instincts before which our mortal nature
> Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
> And for those first affections,
> Those shadowy recollections,
> Which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
> Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
> Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal silence: truths that wake
> To perish never;
> Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
> Nor man, nor boy,
> Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
> Can utterly abolish or destroy!
> Hence, in a season of calm weather,
> Though inland far we be,
> Our souls have sight of that immortal sea

Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore." [1]

Turning to a wholly other field of literature, in Ps. xxix, that marvellous Song of the Storm, the writer is watching the course of a hurricane. He sees the trees uprooted and splintered, the forked flames of the lightning flashing, the mountains shaken with an earthquake shock, the wild cattle in their terror prematurely giving birth to their young, and in all the various phenomena he is stirred to a deep consciousness of Jehovah's presence. The storm has been a theophany to him,—a revelation of God to his spiritual nature. In the terror, the crash, and the roar of it, he hears with distinctness the "voice of Jehovah". And by that phrase, six times repeated, he does not mean that the thunder is caused by God speaking, like as the articulate sounds, called words, are caused by men speaking [2]. He is not dealing with *causes* at all, he is dealing altogether with *effects*. He is not penning a scientific disquisition, but in a state of enraptured religious communion,—of God-consciousness, he uses words which must be explained as the outcome of that state. He is not thinking of the cause of the thunder, but of the effect which it produced on himself. He is not in the passionless, prosaic state of seeking an explanation of thunder; it is not his reason or understanding that is active, but, as the whole hymn

[1] Cf. Byron, *Childe Harold*, ii. 25; iii. 90; iv. 178.
[2] See *Expositor*, second series, i. 161 *seq.*, 241 *seq.*

shows, his spirit, his religious nature. God was speaking to him through that storm and tempest, and he calls the thunder "the voice of Jehovah", because the effect of the thunder had been an excitation of his religious emotions, a setting him face to face with God. Each peal that echoes and re-echoes from heaven to earth stirs him to the very depth of his being. The thrill that passes through him as he stands watching the storm could be produced by Jehovah alone. Just such a storm he may often have witnessed before, without any such emotion arising; but when his spiritual faculty was awake[1], that bursting storm, over and above all appeal which

[1] "Of course to one so modern as I am, 'Enfant de mon siècle,' merely to look at the world will be always lovely. I tremble with pleasure when I think that on the very day of my leaving prison both the laburnum and the lilac will be blooming in the gardens, and that I shall see the wind stir into restless beauty the swaying gold of the one, and make the other toss the pale purple of its plumes so that all the air shall be Arabia for me. Linnaeus fell on his knees and wept for joy when he saw for the first time the long heath of some English upland made yellow with the tawny aromatic blossoms of the common furze; and I know that for me, to whom flowers are part of desire, there are tears waiting in the petals of some rose. It has always been so with me from my boyhood. There is not a single colour hidden away in the chalice of a flower, or the curve of a shell, to which, by some subtle sympathy with the very soul of things, my nature does not answer. Like Gautier, I have always been one of those 'pour qui le monde visible existe'.

"*Still, I am conscious now that behind all this beauty, satisfying though it may be, there is some spirit hidden of which the painted forms and shapes are but modes of manifestation, and it is with this spirit that I desire to become in harmony. I have grown tired of the articulate utterances of men and things. The Mystical in Art, the Mystical in Life, the Mystical in Nature—this is what I am looking for. It is absolutely necessary for me to find it somewhere.*"—De Profundis, by Oscar Wilde.

it made to the senses, and challenge which it threw down to reason to account for it, became a very theophany. God spoke to him through it. It was to the voice of Jehovah that he was listening.

I think we may take it that the apprehension of God is not a thing which comes within the purview of mental or material science, but is a thing altogether apart—an intuition of the spirit. "The astronomer who has swept the heaven with his telescope and found no God, has not disproved the existence of God, has not even disproved that the heavens are telling the glory of God; any more than a man who has looked at empty space through a microscope and found no atmosphere, has disproved the existence of the air we breathe. It is not by the microscope that we detect the presence of the air; and it is not by the telescope, or by the eye at all, however aided, that God can be discerned."[1] There is a spirit within us which has the same right to be trusted, when its assertions are properly examined and understood, as any bodily sense. And the assertion which the spirit makes is this, that in and through the phenomena of nature, it has direct perception of Godhead. There are beyond question phenomena, admittedly altogether natural, produced by ascertainable laws, which yet are suggestive of the supernatural,—i. e., they are capable of throwing the spectator into a state of religious emotion. The evidence of God's presence in Nature and in History depends not on an Induction or a Syllogism, but on an immediate

[1] Rev. P. Thomson.

intuition of the spirit." And if this be conceded, the whole force of the Kantian Dialectic, as regards the idea of God, is broken,—in fact, it becomes simply irrelevant, for God can then be known empirically [1]. The trustworthiness of this, as of other ultimate data of our perceptive faculties, must be of necessity a postulate, a thing above criticism: the only verification that is possible of it being the consensus of those who encounter such phenomena in the sensations awakened by means of them.

And there is a remarkable consensus. The idea of God is co-extensive with the human race. No nation at any time has anywhere been found entirely devoid of religious consciousness. All races and tribes, even the most degraded, have been found to have some conception of a Higher Being, a feeling of dependence on supernatural powers, and consequently some kind of religious exercise.

It is true that those inclined to hold that religious ideas and sentiments are not essential to human nature, find little difficulty in collecting statements of travellers and missionaries in support of their views; but there can be no excess of care, as Max Müller warns us, in accepting evidence on such a matter in the case of savage tribes. Before accepting it, we need to be satis-

[1] "L'athée n'est point à mes yeux un faux esprit; je puis vivre avec lui aussi bien et mieux qu'avec le dévot, car il raisonne davantage, *mais il lui manque un sens*, et mon âme ne fond point entièrement avec la sienne; il est froid au spectacle le plus ravissant, et il cherche un syllogisme lorsque je rends une action de grâce."—*Appel à l'Impartiale Postérité*, par la citoyenne Roland.

fied as to what kind of authority can be claimed by those who offer it; did they know the language, and did they know it not only sufficiently well to converse on ordinary subjects, but to enter into friendly, unreserved conversation on topics which, even among the highly educated, are singularly open to misunderstandings? Savages are shy and silent in the presence of white men, and they have a superstitious reluctance even to mention the names of their gods and heroes. "Suppose," says Max Müller, "an educated native of India or China were to appear in the Black Country, and address some questions in scarcely intelligible English to an ordinary collier, and ask him what his ancestors had told him about the origin of being, what account would he give to his countrymen of the state of religious faith in England, if all his information had been derived from the answers he would be likely to receive from such witnesses?"

It was once supposed, on what seemed good authority, that the Zulus had no religious ideas at all. Captain Gardiner, in his *Narrative of a Journey to the Zulu Country undertaken in* 1835, gives a dialogue between himself and a native which discloses a degree of religious darkness that could hardly be exceeded. But hear the account given by the Rev. D. Callaway of the fundamental religious notions which he, after long residence among the various clans of the Zulus, after acquiring an intimate knowledge of their language, and, what is still more important, after gaining their confidence, was able to extract from their old men and women. One of the

Zulus, whose confidence he had won, said to him: "We did not hear first from the white man about the King who is above. In summer-time, when it thunders, we say, 'The King is playing.' And if there be one who is afraid, we say to him: 'It is nothing but fear. What thing belonging to the King have you eaten?'" Another very old man stated, "When we were children it was said, 'The King is in heaven.' We used constantly to hear this when we were children. They used to point to the King on high; but we did not hear his name—we heard only that the King is on high. We heard it said that the Creator of the world is the King which is above."

A very old woman, when examined by one of her own countrymen, said: "When we spoke of the origin of corn, saying, 'Whence came this?' the old people said, 'It came from the Creator, who created all things; but we do not know Him.' When we asked continually: 'Where is the Creator? for our chiefs we see,' the old men denied, saying, 'And those chiefs, too, whom we see, were created by the Creator.' And when we asked, 'Where is He? for He is not visible at all. Where is He then?' we heard our fathers, pointing towards heaven, say: 'The Creator of all things is in heaven.'"

And these are utterances culled from a people reputed on the evidence of a passing traveller to be void of all religious ideas.

The question whether religious belief is universal is very fairly considered in Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (i. 377, seq.), and "as far as I can judge", he says, "from the immense mass of accessible

evidence, we have to admit that the belief in spiritual beings appears in all low races with whom we have attained to thoroughly intimate acquaintance."

In attributing to man a spiritual faculty, which as necessarily receives an impression of Godhead, when God presents Himself to it, as the eye receives impressions from the material world, it must not be forgotten that, as with all our other faculties, it will be possessed by the individuals of our race in a very varying degree of natural power—that it may be weakened by disuse, and destroyed by disease. But pathological conditions will no more falsify the general statement that man is a *spiritual* being—endowed, i. e., with a faculty for directly apprehending God,—than pathological conditions (in this case far more prevalent) will falsify the general statement that man is a rational being—endowed, i. e., with a faculty for thinking and reasoning.

But if God be a Being capable of impinging Himself on the human consciousness through a spiritual faculty with which man from the first has been endowed, and if all men, everywhere, and at all times, have been receiving impressions of Godhead, we should naturally expect at least some such general agreement between their recorded religious impressions as between the impressions received through the other faculties of our nature; and an explanation must be sought of the extraordinary diversity of religious beliefs, ranging from the lowest, most degraded fetishism, to the purest, highest Theism.

This diversity is absolutely inexplicable if we

let the assumption pass, that the mythological forms of ancient religions rest upon natural personifications. Nothing can be further from the truth, even though Principal Tulloch writes confidently that "everybody knows that it is so"[1]. The pure and simple fact is, that it is not so. It is not the fact that the forces of Nature were deified by the early imagination of humanity, groping after a divine meaning in the separate phenomena of the universe, and that Reason, seeking always for a higher unity, was driven onward with the growth of spiritual reason to conceive of the Divine as moral and spiritual, rather than as physical,—as an eternal and spiritual Life underlying all other life.

Nothing can be more contrary than this to the clear facts of the history of religious thought. That God is One was the original perception of the human consciousness, and this sense of unity was more or less gradually lost in the effort to give expression to the soul's experience. We must bear in mind that the perception of God by an immediate intuition of the spirit is one of those which, like the perceptions of the senses, can be realized without language. To realize general conceptions and abstract ideas without names is impossible. But we can see the sun, and can think of it without necessarily naming it. It is the same with the perception of Deity; it existed in men's consciousness before attempt was made, or could be made, to name it. But soon, for purpose of converse and communion, the need would arise to find a name for it, and the

[1] *Expositor*, second series, v. 261.

prayer of Jacob, "Tell me, I pray thee, Thy name," as the question of Moses, "What shall I say unto them if they shall say unto me, What is His name?" must have been the question and the prayer of every nation on earth.

Now I need hardly remind you that all our words expressive of immaterial conceptions are derived by metaphor from words expressive of sensible phenomena. Metaphor means the transferring of a name from the object to which it properly belongs to other objects which strike the mind as in some way or other participating in the peculiarities of the first object. Now, seeing that the first materials of language supply expressions for such impressions only as are received through the senses, it is evidently impossible to express abstract ideas except by metaphors —impossible to speak of the spiritual except in terms of the material. And this is the great difficulty which religion has had to encounter, and which has brought it not seldom to ruin.

It is not too much to say that the whole of the religious vocabulary of the ancients was made up of conscious, deliberate metaphors. With us these metaphors may be all forgotten, so that we can speak of *spirit*, without thinking of *breath*; of *revelation*, without thinking of a *veil*; of *God*, without thinking of *the sky*—though that, etymologically, is the meaning of the name; but there was a time when not only all the thoughts which outwent the narrow horizon of everyday life had to be expressed by means of metaphor, but when those metaphorical words had not lost their primary significance. At such a time the attempt

to convey a transcendental meaning through words expressive of sensible ideas would be liable and almost certain to beget in vulgar and prosaic minds a confusion between what was said and what was meant: there would be a tendency to slip back from the spiritual to the material, with such a predilection for the material that what was at first a poetical metaphor, a beautiful fetch of the imagination, would give rise to a degrading superstition, or an absurd idolatry.

We can thus easily see how Sun-worship arose[1]. If there was a root meaning to burn, to be bright, to warm, such a root might supply a recognized word for the sun and for the sky. Now follow out the mental process by which the name of the sky might be wrenched from its material object and used for the name of something totally different. Before the idea of God could take really definite shape, it wanted a name; it could not be fully grasped, or clearly conceived, except by naming it. But there was not a word in the whole store-house of language that was adequate to this mighty conception,—that would not fetter more than wing the thought that fluttered within and called for light and freedom. A name, however, or even several names, would be tried and chosen, and a certain satisfaction be gained at having means, however imperfect, to describe it. But not a name could be given that would be more than a sign—a poor, imperfect sign, a predicate only, and a very partial predicate, of some small portion of that vague, vast Something which slumbered in the mind. When the name

[1] Cf. Max Müller, *Science of Religion*, Lecture IV.

of the brilliant sky had been chosen, as it has been chosen at one time or another by nearly every nation upon earth, "sky" was not the full expression of that within the mind which sought expression. People knew perfectly well what they meant by the visible sky, and were far from confounding it with God. But the brilliant sky, as the most exalted, the vastest, the only unchanging thing that had received a name, was that which best was able to lend its name to the as yet unborn idea of the Infinite, with which the human mind was travailing in birth and in pain to be delivered. And so the name was borrowed. But there was no identification of the sky with the definite idea of Deity, no thought for a moment of the blue canopy above as being God. It was but a first attempt at defining the indefinite impression of Deity, by a name that should approximately, or metaphorically, render at least one of its most prominent features. The first framer of that name of the Deity could as little have thought of the material heaven as that prodigal son in the parable, when he gave voice to his repentance in the words: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee."

But consider the inevitable result of such a name as the sky having been given and accepted. The seeking and finding such a name, however imperfect, was the act of a strong, poetical mind, which could struggle with the idea of God which was within it, till it had conceived and brought it forth by the bestowal of a name. But when that name had to be used by the young and the old, the mature and the immature, the unlettered

and prosaic, as well as by the cultured and thoughtful, it was impossible to save it from misunderstanding; and prayer would be addressed to the literal sky, the visible canopy over our heads, to send rain, to protect the fields, the cattle, and the corn,—to give to man his daily bread. Soon, too, would come the time when things true of the visible sky would be told of its divine namesake, and legends would spring up, destroying every trace of the conception of Deity that once was hidden beneath that ambiguous word, and religion would, in this way, give place to mythology.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the idea of Godhead preceded all mythology, the fruitful source of which was the attempt to attach that idea to a name.

We find, as I have said, almost universally, that the sky has been chosen as the nearest approach to that conception which in sublimity, brightness, and infinity transcends all others, as much as the bright, blue sky transcends all other things visible on earth. But the same mental yearning which found its first satisfaction in using the name of the brilliant sky as an indication of the Divine, would soon grasp at other names of the sky, not expressive of brilliancy, and therefore more appropriate to a religious mood in which the Divine was conceived of in the aspect of power, dreadfulness, and mystery. Nor is this all. The very imperfection of all the names that had been adopted, their very inadequacy to express the fulness and infinity of the Divine, kept up the search for other names, till

the name of every part of Nature that had ever stirred a religious emotion in man had been transferred to the Omnipresent. And as all the mischief of mythology arose from forgetting, or not heeding, that though language has its bounds in the natural and material, there are no such bounds to our intellectual and spiritual perceptions, and that if we wed these last to words, it is by metaphor only we do so,—I say that, as the mischief of mythology arose from forgetting the *metaphorical character* of language in matters transcending the world of sense,—from forgetting that in speaking of the immaterial in terms of the material, it is part only of the connotation of the word which must be allowed to engage the mind; so the mischief of polytheism arose from taking all the separate words which had been used to express and convey the impressions of Godhead as if they stood for separate, independent existences.

So far is Monotheism from having been evolved out of an original Polytheism, that Polytheism is rather a diseased outcome, through the influence of language, of an original Monotheism, which, amid all the forest of myths and rabble rout of divinities, may distinctly be traced at every stage of their existence in one and all of the ethnic religions of which history has preserved a record.

The position seems impregnable that a man can become conscious of God in a manner strictly analogous to that in which he becomes conscious of the material world. Man, as a material being, is surrounded by a physical environment, which is constantly acting upon him, and presenting

itself to his consciousness. Man, as a spiritual being, is surrounded by a spiritual environment, which is also constantly acting upon him and presenting itself to his consciousness. That spiritual environment is God. And this being so, we have no need to suggest an infiltration of Hebrew ideas among the Gentiles, or to resort to the more desperate hypothesis of an universal primeval revelation, some rays of which still lingered in the pagan darkness, in order to account for those gems of moral and spiritual truth which we encounter in the ethnic religions, and which prove such a puzzle and perplexity to many. Instead of a definite revelation of Himself made by God at a particular time to the human race, the occasional fragments of which are to be here and there discovered, the revelation which He made was continuous.

It is the actual presence of God and His influence upon a spirit made for communion with Himself which account for religion in all its stages. God reveals Himself in all ages, in all nations, and under all conditions; but though the *im*pressions which they receive of Him everywhere resemble each other, the *ex*pression given to these phenomena of consciousness will be marked by the characteristic differences of the races and the ages.

Taking the accepted division of the human race into the Aryan, the Semitic, and the Turanian or Allophylian, we find that the Semitic character stood entirely apart from that of either of the other two families of people. It was everywhere marked by a narrow earnestness, averse

on the whole to science and art, but tending to enthusiasm, and even fanaticism, for abstract ideas of morality and religion. The characteristic conception of worship in all Semitic nations was accordingly a worship of God in History—of God as affecting the destinies of individuals and nations, rather than of God as wielding the powers of nature. Their fundamental ancestral name for the Deity was El, the Strong One; and as other names were in time devised to express the inexpressible, though the multiplicity of names would conduce to a belief in a multiplicity of gods, yet, inasmuch as these names were mostly expressive of moral qualities, which do not readily lend themselves to personification, it was always a matter of comparative ease to return from multiplicity to unity—from polytheism to monotheism.

It was otherwise with the other two families of people. There was a common Aryan religion before the separation of the Aryan race; and a common Turanian religion before the separation of the Chinese and the other tribes of the Turanian class; and in each case the original name of the Deity was that of a natural object—the sun. But their worship was not really, not originally, never properly, a worship of Nature; rather was it a worship of God in Nature,—of God as appearing behind the veil of nature, rather than of God as appearing behind the veil of the human heart. When the names of God were taken from objects in nature, the case was other than when the names were expressive of moral qualities; for when those natural objects became confounded with

the God to whom their names had been applied, they assumed a personality so strong and permanent, that for the people who worshipped them to revert to monotheism required a powerful struggle, and was seldom accomplished without iconoclastic revolution.

But these names, I repeat, were originally only alternative names, descriptive of different aspects of one and the same Divine Being. It was due to the working of the popular mind that they came in course of time to be regarded as the names of separate entities.

There is incontestable proof that the Deity was originally conceived of as one, and, though this conception was largely lost, owing to quite explicable reasons, it never was entirely obliterated. In times of deeper stress and moment the crowd of minor gods and goddesses melted into nothingness, and the Greeks would make appeal to Zeus, the Romans to Jupiter, as the one supreme God of their worship. Nor let it be forgotten that among cultured and civilized nations there were never failing voices of indignant protest against the absurd, repellent myths and legends which disfigured and degraded the popular religion.

God reveals Himself, and always has been revealing Himself, to a spiritual faculty in man through the phenomena and forces of the universe, their beauty, their grandeur, their beneficence, their awfulness; and the impressions received through this faculty are different, not only in degree but in kind, from those received through reason and the senses. He has revealed Himself also, and here more particularly, as regards the

pre-Christian era, to the Hebrew race, through humanity, and especially through those elect, outstanding representatives of it who, with finer ear and clearer vision than their fellows, become as His organs the guardian angels of our race. And finally, He has revealed Himself through the one consummate man, Christ Jesus, the perfection of whose character is ungrudgingly admitted and extolled even by those who, inconsistently, deny the reality of His Godhead.

No higher revelation of God is conceivable than that made through the highest representative of humanity, and the legitimate claim is advanced for the Christian religion—i. e., the embodiment of the idea of God as presented by Christ,—that it is the absolute and universal religion. It stands at the head of the religions of the world, related to all, but yet markedly differenced from all by that provision for redemption through Christ's blood which is its essential characteristic. It is a wrong thing in Christians to group all the other religions together and to stamp them indiscriminately as false. Great as are the errors and abuses which inhere in the ethnic faiths, even in their most corrupt forms they contain a measure of moral and spiritual truth. They hold a more or less adequate embodiment of that idea of God which is common to the human race. Christianity is at once the remedy of all that is false in them and the fulfilment of all that is true. Taking up[1] into itself all that is of truth in them, it would bring them, indeed, to an end, but only as the sun brings the

[1] Cf. Harris, *Self-Revelation of God*, p. 15.

light of the stars to an end, not by quenching it, but by absorbing it in the light which floods the firmament, flowing from a central source. The cry of Christ's Church is, to those who hold the faith in fragments [1], to come and see those fragments united in a single harmonious whole. The Presence in the sky, the Presence in the soul, and the great Presence everywhere that can be felt, but never seen,—the form of nature, the form of man, and the life which has no form,—one or other of these three things will be found underlying the different religions of the nations, and they have been all comprehended in the religion of Christ. Here is a temple within which may stand in all brotherly agreement together, the children of the Father, those who worship God in nature,—the children of the Son, those who worship God in humanity,—the children of the Spirit, those who bow down before the mystery of universal life. There is a glory of the world around, a glory of the world within, a glory of the world above, and each of these has been separately recognized; but now they are no longer separate, for they have been brought to one resplendent focus, and the glory of the Lord has been so revealed that all flesh may worship it together,—the Father of an Infinite Majesty, His honourable, true, and only Son, also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

[1] See Matheson, *Voices of the Spirit*, pp. 95, 96.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF CHRISTIANITY CONSIDERED AS EVIDENCE OF ITS TRUTH

R. Fanshawe, M.A.

Introduction.

The subject of this lecture is the Universal nature of the Christian religion, regarded as evidence of its truth. It is a large and complex problem; as large as life and complicated with all the last issues of history and thought. To deal with it deeply would demand three things—first, an analysis of the meaning of "Universality", which is the central and most far-reaching question of metaphysics; second, a review of the full contents of Christianity, which must involve a wide and sympathetic theology; third, a clear conception of evidence and truth, which presupposes a doctrine of Logic and Knowledge. For such an inquiry a treatise and a system would be too short. In the brief apology of an hour all I can attempt is to indicate in hurried outline the rich scope of an argument, which I believe is the truest because the most inclusive, as well as the one which meets most deeply the movement and need of the Modern Spirit.

Universality.

Let us plunge at once into the chill atmosphere of metaphysics and what may seem the misty problem of the "Universal". Whether we like it and know it or not, by privilege of our nature and the burden of our inheritance we are ineradicably metaphysical. We want to know and to explain; we look before and after, and also below and above; we seek for cause and for law. Our life is moulded by ideas and institutions which are the deposit and embodiment of past philosophies. The language which shapes our lips and souls brims with the breath of earlier metaphysics. Such words as self, person, individual, cause, law; such distinctions as mind and matter, form and spirit, idea and reality, are the concentrated expression of a long philosophic history. As rational beings we are inspired by a universal and spreading principle, which impels us to cry out for light and coherence, and demands an answer which will unify and organize our life. No doubt this metaphysical instinct operates unconsciously as well as with reflection, and in forms most manifold. It works in primitive imagination and simple piety; in the reconciling harmonies of art and literature; in the limited abstractions of science, and the full unification of the philosopher. But whether its motive be love or wonder, the pressure of practical need, or pure intellectual impulse, or, what is most true, a fusion of all these influences, emotional, active, rational; man as an organic being, by the very fulness of his

nature, and pre-eminently by his divine endowment of reason, must freely satisfy that nature with unity and order.

But in defining thus the metaphysical impulse, as an ordering and organizing function, rooted in the whole organic life of man and centralized in his reason, we have discovered the main meanings of our term the "Universal". This word, like its Greek parallel "Catholic", involves on the face of it two factors—the one and the many. Whatever else is included in "Universality" and "Catholicity", these two at least are ultimate constituents—on the one side a unity, on the other a manifold. Now it is obvious that these two factors may be related in two ways. First, we may regard the element of unity as present in, related to, or recognized by the many. Secondly, we may conceive the unity as a whole containing or ordering the many. A single illustration will fix for our reference this fundamental contrast. It is indeed no accident that these noble names, Universal and Catholic, so often marred by a narrowness not their own, bear the image of those sovereign powers of ancient (I will say also modern) life, Greece and Rome. As "catholic" in its primitive use means what is true of all or the whole, so the vitality and greatness of Greece is mainly found in that spirit of idealized humanity which became the diffused atmosphere of a common culture. Again, if "universal" is properly the whole or all conceived as a unity, Rome stands the type of solid concrete power, organizing a world into its imperial and corporate nature. Here, then, we

have two forms, and two historic illustrations (to which I shall recur) of "universality". These two I will call on the one hand "the common or distributive", the one in the many; on the other the organic or corporate, the many in the one. In the light of this distinction and these examples I will ask you to follow me into a fuller but brief analysis of the forms of universality.

A. (1) We all should agree to speak of the light and heat of the sun as a thing universal, because it spreads through all space, and affects the perception of all sentient nature. In the same way there are persons and ideas and human productions which run with an unrestricted currency of praise and recognition. Let us mark off this meaning as the *Universal of Appeal* —"Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus."

(2) But, secondly, there is that universal, whether we call it idea or law or principle or order, which not merely appeals to all individual judgement, but which enters into every instance as an actual quality or element. By an idea such as "man" is understood those common qualities of "animal organization and rational endowment" which are universally present in all individuals, and by which we intellectually unify our thought on the subject. By a "law or principle" I understand those uniform and constant relations by which we unify and interpret a series of facts (not here necessarily members of a class), which are the embodiment and illustration of the law. Now there has been a prevalent opinion that the true idea of a thing, which is after all the end of all Knowledge,

is discovered by a process of comparison and abstraction, which leaves out the distinctive and retains the common residuum as the full definition. Such a method of course has an element of truth and an element of use, but when exclusively applied it may be dangerous and fatal. Let me take an illustration from the Ethics of Mr. H. Spencer. In defining morality, which is a form of conduct, he seeks to discover that quality which is common to all conduct, both moral and non-moral; and finding this in "the adjustment of means to an end," he offers that conception as an adequate definition. It is clear even from this example that the consistent application of the method will explain away what is distinctive, and perpetually leads back to a more bare and meagre universality. In opposition to a view which interprets the later by the earlier, the higher by the lower, the more by the less developed, we maintain with Aristotle, and in agreement with a deeper doctrine of historic evolution and a sane teleological idealism, that the true nature of a thing is to be found in its full development. The true universal is not the minimum of common features, but the full-grown ideal. The idea of "man" is not adequately given by reducing his endowment to the level of the infant, but by following it out into its highest expression. Such a universality may be distinguished as the universality *of the ideal, or Perfection.*

(3) But again, an idea, a person, or principle may, like the sun, operate as a positive centre of attraction—and this universality, or aspect of it,

I call *the central.* And of this we might take as a type the individual self—the personal, identical ego. At this point, however, we seem to pass from that universality where the one is related to the many, to that concrete or organic universal where the many are organized in one.

B. (1) Of this *organic universal* of fulness I will give three separate types. First, there is *the individual*, regarded as an organic whole, whose universality consists in the richness of his capacities. This is what we mean when we speak of universal men, of the myriad-minded vision and vitality of Shakespeare; of the solid versatility and imperial breadth of a Caesar or a Charles the Great; of the manifold creative endowment of a Michel Angelo; of the full harmonious humanism of a Goethe. (2) A second form of the organic universal is illustrated by those larger human organizations, social, political, and religious, which possess a unity of a corporate kind. And (3) third, there is the *whole system* of life and knowledge and being universal, the organized and orderly whole of an intelligible cosmos.

And finally, since order and organization and unity imply resistance and opposition; since human nature, life at large, and perhaps all being, is the field of a deep-seated antagonism; since, as we know it, it is a dual world which craves for unity, the principles and forces of organizing order, if not always, yet largely and deeply work by the harmonizing and reconciliation of conflicting factors. Such a Universal we characterize as *Reconciling.*

These distinctions, I am afraid, may appear for the moment elaborate and metaphysical, but they are really not far removed from the breath of life, and will reveal, I believe, their significance in what I have to say of Religion.

Universality of Religion.

We have seen that man by the whole force of his divided yet growing nature seeks and must seek the calm of unity and fulfilment; that he pursues his ideal in a law and order, which encompass and interpret him, and that in sum he strives to bring his individual life into full and true relation to that whole of which he is a member. As such, man seeks his universal ideal. But among all the forms under which he would realize his true relations, of all the forces which inspire or regulate his movement, religion is the most ancient, the most effectual, the fullest, the most ultimate, the most universal. It is indeed but the crown and complement, and the final interpretation of those minor and more partial movements of his spirit. At every point of life, feeling, activity, and thought, it vindicates itself by such fulfilment. The feeling of infinity, vague perhaps and unvocal in itself, which rises into life before the starry immensities and the panorama of time; the sense of unutterable dependence, and of untrammelled freedom, which clothe themselves in awe and aspiration,—these feelings, I say, which in some measure are feelings of the universal, are taken up and reaffirmed in religion, and receive from it the concentration and consecration of the Infi-

nite Person. That pure passion of love, which poets from Plato to Browning have counted a type and an education for an undying union, presumes its fulfilment in a Divine Eternity, postulates and points to the Beauty of Holiness, and the Supreme Personal love as its true realization. The imagination which has built for man in literature and art high palaces of peace, by its spirit of reconciling calm feels after the Divine and final Healing. The will, which by its natural craving for community goes out into the devotions of personal self-sacrifice, and the broadest relations of human brotherhood, cries out for an Imperative Personal Power to sustain its venture and make good its defection in a Universal Kingdom of ultimate Good. The persistent idealism of human life, inspired by the conception of a higher self, demands the reality of a Divine Perfection. The permanent protest of justice calls for a full conciliation of all conflicting claims. The science which follows the lines which run through the life of nature, and develops the partial unities underlying the whole, assumes a cosmos, a law, a force, which can only be reflected from an interpreting mind, and embodied as the expression of a Controlling Intelligence and a Creative Will. Philosophy itself, which directly pursues the one in the many, by its final faith in unity of principle and by its growing grasp of the realm of reasonableness, only endeavours to express, in the grey tones and bare forms of reason and principle, that unity and order which religion invests with the whole virtue of Life, and with the full and

moving efficacy of a Person. And finally, history at large, that moving complex of human forces, by a method deeper than any of its factors, and a logic more organic than is perhaps yet known, by its past and by its promise, implies the Divine Solution of our enigma Life. Without that solution, all seeming law and order is at last illusion and chaos. Life is nothing, if it is neither intelligent nor intelligible. But if it be these, it can be so adequately only if the Universal order be One and Divine.

Universality of Christianity.

Now if the full evidence of religion is found in the depth and breadth of the solution which it offers of life, the same universality will serve as a test of the various forms of religion, primitive, historical, or philosophic, which have moved humanity. I might point out that Pantheism, in its extremer forms, while seeming the most organic and comprehensive of beliefs, by suppressing freedom and personality, eventually sacrifices all ethical and other distinction, and fails to attain true unity, of which the individual is the type. I might show that Deism, the antithesis of Pantheism, which was really little more than a decadent and unhistorical Christianity, is a type of an abstract religion, a residuum of belief out of touch with life. Even Theism, if isolated from its natural setting and development and treated as a Philosophic faith, would seem to fall short in organic power of reconciliation and central historical influence. But by the limits of space and the pressure of our

principle that we must look for the true universal in the full development, I am constrained to pass to Christianity, which I shall endeavour to prove can claim to be the Universal Religion in its unique and complete meaning. I shall first try to bring out the range and richness of it from the inside. Secondly, I shall bring it into relation to other Universal historic forces, religious or secular. And thirdly, I shall illustrate its relation to some of the more vital and dominant ideas of modern life.

A. Christianity in Itself.

(*a*) The unity of Christianity, which is also the secret of its universality, is to be found in the Life and Person of Christ. The centre and sum of our religion is not a creed, nor a history; neither a method nor a system; not an ideal, a law, or an institution. It is all these, it is the unity of these, and it is more than these because it is a Life. Born at the heart of history and in the fulness of time, and yet in a sense apart from all, this Life stands out the Central Personality of all history, inexhaustible in its appeal, the permanent type of Individual Perfection. This Unique Individual, portrayed for us with the supreme distinction of Divine art, has proved the most potent organizing force in history, the most radiant and the most attractive influence. While vital with the full vitality of ideal nature, His Person claims to be the Method of mankind in all His movement, the embodiment of law imperative, the expression of organic Truth. Again, this Living and Moving Person

offers to reverent analysis or intuition a strange Universality which is strangely natural. Whatever is most sanely heroic in man, most tender and intimate in woman; all that is gracious and pure in feeling; the calm of strenuous will, the untroubled depth of intuitive assurance; all the infinite surrenders of humility and sacrifice; the unqualified assertion of authoritative finality; all these and more meet in that Life with a noble simplicity of truth which must reflect the original. Nor less was that Life the fulfilment of those ideals, organic to man, which are clothed in the functions of king and judge, of teacher and priest. In sum—it is a brief and meagre sum—the centre of Christianity is a Unique and Universal Person.

(*b*) But the Universality of Christ must be interpreted further by the teaching that He uttered, the doctrine which He inspired, and the organization which He created. The Mind of Christ is marked by the same infinite range, the same simple depth, the same reconciling unity of fundamental contrasts, the same central organic power of unifying, as His Life. It would be impossible for any one, much more for myself, to review here the full compass of Christian thought. All that I find feasible is to select three typical and far-reaching aspects, which we may regard as representative of the whole.

1. We are constrained by our nature to regard all objects under the relation of quantity as a one and as a manifold; and throughout this lecture we have felt the pressure of this widest of all problems, the relation of the individual

and the universal. Now no one can fail to see the salient fact that Christian thought is both deeply individualist and deeply universal.

a. It is deeply individualist. Elements no doubt of the idea of individuality had been brought out in Greek philosophy, in Roman law, and in Jewish religion. But Christianity first brought fully into play and honour the human self, as the true centre of individual life, of infinite value, sacred and inviolable in its independence. I cannot stay to ask how far this deepened and heightened idea of the Human Person was due to the doctrine of immortality, how much it was affected by an intensified vision of sin, by the new emphasis of human worth and equality before the Divine judgement, or by the renewed appeal to the Divine image in human nature; nor even in what measure it was revealed and consecrated by the achieved Perfection of that Unique Life. The theory of the human person has waited on modern Idealism, and still awaits its adequate expression. The organic reality and the ultimate grounds and forms of its value were finally fixed in Christianity for moral and religious life.

β. On the other hand, Christian thought is deeply universal, both in regard to the Divine and the Human nature. The Divine Universal is the Will of God, whose wide and righteous Imperative we must freely reaffirm. It is also the Name or Nature of God, whose image is operant in the lowest humanity, and whose high perfection we are bidden to imitate. It is the Infinite Father, whose home is that transcendent

and timeless world, which our imperfection calls heaven, but also the human spirit, where life eternal begins. It is the Personal Light which radiates to the utmost limit of human receptivity; the absolute and all-moving Love which communicates itself without reserve. It is finally that all-present immanent power, which controls, inspires, and rounds this infinity of detail into a final whole.

Once more, the human universal for Christianity is man, conceived not only as an infinite individual capable of divine perfection, but as a member of a brotherhood as broad, whose centre and type is the Person of Christ, and a unit related to an infinite spiritual society, which from different sides may be called a kingdom of heaven or a church. But universality and individualism (I speak of both in their truer meaning) not merely thus receive their full interpretation, they are blended and reconciled by the Mind and Life of Christ with a completeness both natural and transcendent. The eternal problem, which has haunted all literature and thought and social effort, is here potentially solved on a higher plane with the fulness and ease of absolute simplicity, and in the moving Unity of Personal Life.

(2) Secondly, we are equally impelled by our human endowment to look upon life from what we may call the point of view of opposite quality. We are everywhere confronted by a deep antithesis, an ineradicable dualism. In the language of philosophy and logic, and indeed of science, we speak of positive and negative;

in the realm of knowledge, of true and false; in conduct, of right and wrong; in the world organic, of development and degradation, of life and death; in religion, of sin and holiness. The sources and range of this dualism are too deep and wide for our testing. I will confine myself to one main aspect. In life and history at large there operates a double process. On the one hand it unfolds in natural and orderly development, by a process which we may call consummation. On the other it works with and by failure and correction; by reaction and antagonism. It is a process of redemption. The two, as we know them, are closely interwoven and now inseparable. Had man fulfilled his ideal with flawless perfection, we had known only the first. Glimpses and analogues of such a growth are given at times in some more blessed natures, in the calm process of flower life, even in some periods it might seem of history. Its realization was once seen expressed in that Life which was both Consummation and Redemption. But man in his historic reality is vexed by an urgent dualism. He is troubled by the opposition of actual and ideal. He faces an order which he has marred, a law which he has broken, an end which he has missed, a unity which he has rent. It may be claimed for Christian thought that it places higher the positive ideal, and penetrates deeper into the failure, and fuses both with a more satisfying completeness than any other creed; and yet the fusion is at once thought and life, for it is given in a Person. The pessimism of Christianity is as deep and wide and dark as the chasm between

infinite perfection and infinite failure; but it is a pessimism which points to its own healing, and bridges its own depths. And the optimism of Christianity is not less universal. It is founded on a faith in the primal goodness of Divine creation, on a serene insight into the potential infinity and worth of the human individual and his ineffaceable capacity for redemption, and on a solid conviction of final and universal good.

(3) But thirdly, these deep oppositions are reconciled by Christian thought with an effectual fulness. And here we face perhaps the highest test of the worth whether of argument or art, of person or religion—its power, I mean, of harmonizing the most vital contrasts. Now no one would question that in some deep sense the Idea of Atonement, Mediation, and Reconciliation is central in the teaching and life of Christ. I do not here touch on the deep significance of this doctrine in relation to those ultimate tragic facts of sin, sacrifice, and death. We are now concerned to bring out its meanings in relation to Universality. Atonement, as we know, originally means the reconciliation of what is at variance, and is closely akin to the work of the Mediator and Reconciler. But in some sense, a lower and imperfect sense no doubt, all human thought and activity, literature, society, art, morality, philosophy, religion are efforts to restore a being divided against himself. Each of these may achieve a passing and partial calm. Periods of peace are followed by times of conflict and transition. The whole history of man might be

written from this standpoint of division and reconciliation,—developing, recurring, deepening. After all this is but the secular opposition of war and peace in its widest application. To these minor calms and more fragmentary mediations, the Atonement and Reconciliation of Christian thought are related as the fulfilment to the aspiration, as something more complete, more vital, deeper, more universal; but not alien to them, not antagonistic to their intrinsic meaning.

B. Christian in relation to other Universals.

The second main head of my treatment of Christian Universality was to take the form of a brief review of its relation to other great universal influences—whether secular or religious. The most universal factors of time, antecedent to Christ, are the Life of Greece, the Law of Rome, and the Religion of the Jew. The religion of Greece, that fairyland of polytheism which still haunts our eyes and ears, was early outgrown by philosophic reflection. Purged of its crudities and moral chaos, it became with a Sophocles or Plato a broad ethical theism, or a philosophic faith of the deepest eventual moment to humanity, but not widely operant in common life. The real Universality, the true Religion of Greece, was the splendid and reasonable humanism, of which the spiritual crown was found by the thoughtful few in Divine Perfection. In what sense the higher thought of Greece led up to and was fulfilled in Christian Theology, you will find worked out with complete and penetrating

insight in *The Theology of the Greek Philosophers* by the present Master of Balliol. The religion of Rome, while more austere in its moral schooling, more binding in its formal strength, and stamping on the very name of religion its own central idea of Obligation, was intellectually more petty; in its formalism and ritual more insincere. Confused by the multitudinous Greek imagination and sapped by Greek criticism, it yielded, under the pressure of imperial expansion, to two forms of religious universality. On the one side arose in varying shapes a syncretism or fusion of the more popular worships of East and West. On the other, the person of the emperor became the centre of a worship which seemed to give to the imperial system a new religious sanction and an individual unity. But in truth the Religion of Rome was law and organization, glorified by a sentiment of national greatness, and idealized by a belief in a divine imperial mission. Thus the universal culture and thought of Greece and the universal and reasonable law of Rome produced together a common spiritual atmosphere of cosmopolitan humanism, and an organized coherent order. Although both were infected with germs of incurable decay, yet both contained elements of permanent vitality, and both cried aloud for fulfilment and reconciliation. The fulness of this time, a time conscious both of rich achievement, of tragic emptiness, of wide sympathies, and vague expectation, is marked and summarized for us by the brooding pathos and sad imperial humanism of Virgil. If Rome was "maxima rerum", the greatest thing in the world;

if Greece, according to Sir H. Maine, is the most vital; the religion of the Jew stood a third, universal in some degree as a religion, and proving its expansiveness by a wide proselytism, yet marred also by particular limitations. But the local and universal elements in Judaism were otherwise blended or opposed than in Greece or Rome. That sublime moral monotheism which was slowly unfolded in the history and belief of the Hebrews was potentially universal. Its universality was in some degree grasped and revealed by the Divine intuition of the more profound prophets, while a growing sense of the claims and hopes of individual life makes itself articulate in the Psalms. This religion consecrated the future with a larger hope of healing fulfilment, in eminent contrast with the retrospective pessimism of the Classical world. It illuminated the course of history with the first gleams of orderly progress and of a continuous organic unity. Yet all this largeness of insight and outlook was qualified (1) by a national exclusiveness, which so fair an observer as Tacitus appears to have characterized as a "hatred of the human race" (though he is speaking of the Christian he is thinking of the Jew); (2) by a passionate localism which linked religion indissolubly with city and land and temple; and (3) by a meagre formalism which crushed the spirit of expansion and inwardness under the burden of detail and externality.

The teaching and Life of Christ, resuming and reaffirming all that was most spiritual and universal in earlier Judaism, broke down inevit-

ably its local limitations. The Fatherhood of God is not national but human. The brotherhood of man is incompatible with the pride of racial privilege. The gospel of the infinite worth of the individual soul implicitly removes all barriers of race and class and sex and nationality. The inwardness of moral and spiritual goodness is fatal for a devotion to customary formalism. The final assertion of the spiritual nature of God and His worship is the surrender of all privileges of special sanctity, and the consecration of all persons and places as the Divine Temple. This indeed was the point at which Judaism and Christianity came into critical conflict, and this was the cause of the central tragedy of human history. Not less may we look upon Christianity as the true realization of the aims and failures of Greece and Rome. Its spirit is more pure and diffusive than the Hellenic; its simplicity is at once more direct and more subtle; its insight into the dualisms of life is deeper; its reconciling virtue is more sane and more complete; its idealism is higher; its thought more organic, more warm, on a wider plane. It has superseded the exclusiveness of culture by the humanities of religion, and by its centre of Personal influence and power of corporate organization supplies those elements in which Greece was most wanting. On the other hand, Christianity has the organizing quality, the solid law, the cosmopolitan embrace, the personal centre of Rome, but spiritualized and transfigured into a nobler universality. In sum, shall we say, it brings the true unity, the true compass and the true life of

religion, to crown and interpret the world into which it came. I cannot here attempt to trace how this Christian Catholicity was gradually made good in the Greco-Roman and Jewish world, by the reluctant enlightenment of St. Peter, by the passionate breadth and sane imperial vision of St. Paul, by the serene and deep intuition of St. John. Still less can I follow out the methods by which the New Faith became a universal organizing institution, and slowly attained to its Catholic Creed. Though these matters all offer a rich illustration of my subject, and must be included in its adequate treatment, my main point is to emphasize the large and vital way in which Christianity fulfilled and interpreted Greece and Rome and Judaea as it came to them. How far, in turn, later Christianity was interpreted or misinterpreted by Roman organization, or later Greek thought, or recurring Judaism, is beyond my limits. It may be gathered from what I have said that I believe the ancient world has for us a permanent and vital interest in relation to religion; and that its wide humanities, for this if no other reason, must maintain a permanent place in our life and education. But we should fall lamentably short of a true conception of universality, if we limited our interpretation of Christianity to those earlier centuries, and refused to recognize that all history and every age in its measure is called upon to appropriate, verify, and interpret the vital fulness of Christ. There is no canon of catholicity but His Universal Spirit.

C. Modern Universality.

And this leads me on naturally to my third main topic, the relation of Christianity to what would appear the dominant ideas of modern and contemporary thought. The line of argument which we have followed, though it covers a wider area, was in substance familiar to many of the more thoughtful of earlier Christians who were concerned with evidence. If to the Christian Jew his new faith appealed as the fulfilment of his own deepest aspirations, individual and national, it addressed itself not seldom to the Greek and Roman as the completion of the growth, and the solution of the problems of classical history. The mental attitude of many to-day resembles not a little that of our earliest century. There is much in the modern spirit, I mean in its wider and deeper manifestations, which seems ready again to recognize in Christianity the answer to its problems, and the reconciliation of its divisions. To epitomize an epoch in a word or a sentence might well appear rash. Yet, I believe, we shall not be far out in emphasizing this very idea of universality as its characteristic and more permanent note. The nature of this universality may best be summarized by the two epithets *historical* and *organic*, and by the two ideas of *unity* and *continuity*.

As compared with the eighteenth century, a period of somewhat meagre and mechanical rationalism, the spirit of the nineteenth was dominantly and increasingly historical. To this spirit every branch of life and learning submitted

with transforming effect. The whole romantic movement in literature, art, and religion fostered and was fostered by historic interests if not historic methods. The study of law and politics was lifted to a new plane of progress by the same inspiration. Philosophy became historical with Hegel, and science with Darwin. The geologist has long been writing the history of our earth in ages or periods of millions of years; the physicist and astronomer are more slowly reconstructing the history of the heavens; even the chemist to-day is divining the history of the atom and element. And history itself, with its handmaid archaeology, equipped with its fuller critical and comparative methods, and inspired by a more sympathetic and broader insight, has reconstituted the past with an unknown accuracy and fulness, and extended our vista not only by centuries but by periods. Religion and Theology have been vitalized and transfigured under the same influence.

But the historic spirit and method have not merely extended our knowledge of the past, they have learnt and have taught us to look upon it in a way far more vital and organic. We no longer think of history as a mere framework for monarchs and field for politics. We know that all the forces and factors of life interact organically, and that the whole movement of history is the expression of their harmony. Under the combined influence of Hegel's organic view of reason, and Darwin's organic theory of life, this idea has remoulded the whole range of thought. Those who are familiar with the progress of

psychology know that the conception of human nature now current has precisely this organic character. The human mind is no longer regarded as a bundle of faculties, but as a growing whole, in which elements of feeling, activity, and intelligence are mutually involved at every stage. Even in such an abstract subject as Logic it is seen that the full and true method of knowledge is organic in its nature, a vital whole in which many factors blend and co-operate.

But again, the idea of unity plays a leading part with these other actors. In spite of the parallel increase in specialization, the unity of knowledge becomes daily more manifest. On the side of science the marvellous progress of recent years has largely been due to the fruitful interaction of chemistry, physics, and astronomy; and the same may be said of the biological and social sciences. The far-reaching doctrines of conservation of energy, and correlation of forces, illustrate this tendency in physics as much as the theory of evolution in biology. In history, whether taken in its length or breadth, the idea of unity, preached a generation ago by Prof. Freeman almost as a paradox, has become a commonplace; while we see before us the last outliers in land and race about to enter into the common life of modern humanity. I cannot dwell on the growing expression of the same ideal in the social and political field, whether in the form of expansion and imperialism, or of all those movements which, if not Socialism, are socialistic in the better sense, and not least the increasing sense of a wide human solidarity.

But with unity is bound up the idea of *continuity*. It is possible of course to misinterpret historical continuity into a mere fatalism of inheritance, a mere idolatry of the past, a merely mechanical succession of privileged interests. But freely understood as an historical organic growth, which moves from lower to higher; which is controlled and interpreted by its increasing purpose; which is rooted in the soil but climbs to the light, this doctrine of continuity completes the circle of ideas with which I am dealing. The vogue of the word "evolution" is simply due to the natural way in which it embodies and centralizes these elements of universality. It combines the ideas of inheritance and historic development, of unity of method, and continuity of progress. I am not speaking of evolution now merely as a doctrine of biology, nor merely in its limited method of natural selection. I speak of it as a whole process, which allows for all forces and which interprets in the long run the lower by the higher, the simple by the complete, nature by man, and both by God.

Now this whole atmosphere of modern thought, if taken in its ideal scope and true universal temper, is one to which the spirit of Christianity is vitally appropriate. That spirit appeals to these ideas as their own fulfilment, while it supplements and controls them by a strong consecration of true individuality. It offers itself as the central and unifying solution of all historic movement, as the most organic and most organizing of all historic forces; as the most continuous, because the most complete and perfect ideal

of that one process which is the history of man, and also, if rightly conceived, the Revelation of God.

Universality as Evidence of Truth.

I have sought to show by rapid survey and suggestion what I mean by the universality of the Christian religion. It remains to ask in what degree this character, if adequately established, is evidence of its truth. No one, I believe, however unversed in the language of Logic, would fail to recognize instinctively that this universality does carry with it on its face warrant of a large validity. A brief reference to the chief methods of proof will confirm this impression. In the current Logic of Science, analysis has long separated two main strands of procedure—Induction and Deduction. By Induction is meant that method which proceeds from fact to the principle, order, or law of which it is the expression. It is the prevalent method of all sober inquiry, and its patient application has been one main cause of the constant progress of modern knowledge. But there are two qualifications which I would press on your notice. First, this whole method presupposes that nature, inorganic, organic, human, is the sphere of order, and constitutes a system. Without this deep and universal postulate no step can be taken, no interpretation offered of a single fact. Induction, in short, is still what it was to its discoverer Socrates, the pursuit of the universal; but by the universal now we no longer understand the common meaning or

definition of a term, but rather that large and growing system, that interrelated organic whole of knowledge. Secondly, if for convenience we separate Induction, in reality it is only one factor in a more complete and organic method. On the other hand, Deduction is that method which moves from principle to fact, from order to instance, from universal to particular. Starting with a law it goes on to exhibit the individual as its embodiment or expression, and thereby, as we say, establishes its proof. Thus both Induction and Deduction are concerned together with one central problem, the relation of fact and order, of unit and universal; but they approach this problem from different sides. They are not two methods, but complementary factors of one organic procedure. Now if this be so it is clear that logical proof, in its separate forms, and still more in their combination, is ultimately the exhibition of each individual in its full relations to the whole system of knowledge—that is in its true universality. Such a system or order may be taken on the lower plane of what appears mechanical necessity, or on the higher level of teleological law, or the highest of moral and spiritual freedom. But in each alike the scope of the method and the canon of their validity turn on the growing correlation of the part with a growing whole. The wider the coherence, the fuller the relations, the deeper the contact, the more sure—the more comprehensive is the evidence.

If this be true, if the full and growing test of any truth is given by its universality, then I say

the Universality of the Christian religion is in a very real and deep sense the measure of its truth. For first that principle of universal order, implicit in all life, presumed by science, postulated by logic, proved in philosophy, personalized by religion, in Christianity is developed to the full reach of its historical, moral, and spiritual meaning. As the full universal which crowns all others, it may claim a more complete validity and a more vital coherence. Secondly, if it be true that along every line of thought and life, of natural development and of travail for redemption, humanity is led up to the central, supreme, and reconciling religion of the Universal Person, we find operant in the world a perpetual process of induction, the strength of which is proportionate to its human breadth and the wide correlation of all its factors. But thirdly, the truth of a principle or belief is shown as much by the light it brings as by the light it receives; by the consequences which flow from it as by the aspirations which lead up to it. If we look at Christianity as a Living Universal system, as a vital historic order and Universal Person introduced into time, the whole series of its higher historic effects, the infinite range of moral and religious experience may be held a standing verification and a progressive proof of its adequacy. In sum, if the highest proof of any conclusion is its coherence with the living whole of knowledge, that is, its vital universality; if Christianity be indeed in a true sense Universal; if in the words, the Person, the Religion of Christ, there is really this

simplicity, this depth, this fulness, this rich power of reconciling, this central and unifying force, this spreading virtue and vitality—may they not claim a right of universal appeal and strong validity; not merely because they answer to the need of the individual, which is often limited and inarticulate, but because they meet it with the full organic cogency of Universal Life?

Conclusion.

Every age no doubt requires its own apology and special approach. The argument I have sought to outline might expect to find some echo in all, though peculiarly adapted, I believe, to present conditions. But such an argument unquestionably makes a strong demand upon those whom it might influence. To appreciate its consolidated force requires some effectual knowledge of general history, some genuine openness to the deeper issues of thought, some serious effort to cultivate an insight into the efficient and vital movements of our age. It asks also for a renewed and vital study of the Bible, with a will to accept the fulness of its meaning, and a readiness to steady and enlarge our individualism by the manifold aids of modern scholarship. For such a purpose I would venture to recommend the writings of the late Bishop Westcott, and in particular his *Christus Consummator*; the Hulsean Lectures of the late Professor Hort, *The Way, the Truth, and the Life*—a difficult book, but to my mind the most personal and original contribution of last century

Theology; and the great systematic works of Dr. Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, and *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*.

In the past, Christianity has made its appeal by many methods, for it is as wide as life. No single apology can adequately summarize them. It can, perhaps, point to the fact of their convergence, and may unveil their underlying unity. Yet when all is done by enlarging the view of the foundation, and widening the approach, the final impression of living truth can only be given by the Present and unifying power of the Unique Person; and by the appropriating force of faith, by which I mean the organic vital grasp, of the whole man; and by the slow and growing assimilation of experience.

Perhaps the favourite evidence of an earlier apology were the arguments from Prophecy and Miracle. To-day these have become more often themselves a difficulty. Yet in a sense—in a deep, if transfigured sense, they may remain the most final because the most comprehensive of all. While fully admitting the high ethical and religious interest of Hebrew prophecy, now made living and clear by the accumulated labours of modern scholars, I venture to take the matter here in a wider way. From such a standpoint, and one well warranted by ancient and modern precedent, all human history, Jewish and Gentile, later and earlier, may be interpreted as the progressive unfolding of a distant ideal, as an imperfect revelation of divine oracles, as a prevision of its own redemption, a prophecy of its

own fulfilment, and this argument from prophecy cannot be vexed by disputed dates or minutiae of mystic interpretation.

Again, the fact that this universal fulfilment of human needs should have been lived and made at a supreme historic moment; that all history should find in Him who made it its central solution; that to Him lead forward and back all roads of Life and reflection; that in Him are reconciled the deepest oppositions of our nature; that all this inexhaustible Unique Universality was found in a Personal Life, born in humility of place and of spiritual isolation, lived in brief years mainly of provincial preaching, and silenced, it might seem, by the shame of public execution; that yet this personal religion overran and conquered and organized the world: this—I say—is the perpetual historical marvel, the most transcendent metaphysical fact. The force of this miracle—moral and metaphysical—lies above all critical questions of literary source and comparative evidence. It stands outside all logical and scientific or theological inquiries into the relation of the exceptional to the uniform, of the natural to the supernatural. It is exceptional in its universality; transcendent, because it is completed nature. No doubt those who find in this Universal Power of Christ irresistible evidence of a Unique Nature, not other than He claimed for Himself, will not be ultimately troubled by other unique and seemingly transcendent elements in a Life so Supreme. But the ground of their assurance will remain the solid concrete witness of all experience, the progressive

unification of all life. Such a faith, resting and growing on so deep a soil, will be unshaken by the tumult of passing controversy. It welcomes all knowledge of nature and of man, as a fresh revelation of the Universal Spirit of Truth, and a growing evidence of the fulness of Christ. It admits no false oppositions between sacred and secular, between century and century, for it believes in the meeting of the Divine and Human, sought by man, fulfilled in Christ, interpreted in time. Such a faith, reasonable, whole, organic, historical, on the strength of that Universal experience, which is also Divine Revelation, will strongly affirm—"Behold the Man," but also, no less strongly, though it may be after prolonged doubt, perhaps because of its doubt—"My Lord and my God."

THE PROBLEM OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Rev. W. St. Clair Tisdall, D.D.

The Science of Comparative Religion is the latest-born of all our Sciences. It is based on the vast collection of facts regarding the religious ideas and practices of ancient and modern times, and of nations savage and civilized, which has been amassed through the labours of many scholars. Every true Science deals with *facts*. Its province is to ascertain these facts in the first place, to collect, tabulate, and study them, and then, following the Inductive method introduced by Bacon, to deduce from the study of these facts the conclusions to which they naturally lead. Pseudo-Science, now as of old, proceeds in a contrary direction. It starts with hypotheses and endeavours to accommodate facts thereto. This we must be careful to avoid.

The student of Comparative Religion early learns that it is not honestly possible to place all religions on the same level. Some are most immoral, while others inculcate a lofty morality. Some are modern, and have arisen in historical times, under circumstances with which we are well acquainted, while others are of immemorial antiquity. Some are held only by a few savages, others by many civilized nations. Some religions have their doctrines and practices enshrined in

Sacred Books, others are known to us only through very imperfect accounts given by a few travellers. But from all alike we can learn something, and none of them can we afford to neglect or despise, if we are really students of Comparative Religion. All religions are interesting as affording us the knowledge of what has been believed in the past, or is even now believed, by many of our fellow creatures regarding the highest of all possible themes, and as in large measure revealing the ideas and motives which have to a greater or less degree, really or professedly, influenced their conduct. It is not always amid the most civilized communities that we find the highest religious conceptions.

In connexion with Comparative Religion many problems naturally present themselves. It is natural to inquire, What is the origin of Religion, what is its value, what connexion exists between one form of Religion and another, what amount of truth may be learnt from any or all of them? But to me at least it seems that the great problem of Comparative Religion is to decide: (*a*) What beliefs does the comparative study of Religions prove to have been held, in some form or other, universally—or at least very generally—among men in all ages? and (*b*) In what relation does Christianity stand to these widely accepted beliefs?

Anthropologists[1] inform us that there are two convictions common to man everywhere and at all times. These are: (1) The conviction

[1] Cf. De Quatrefages, *The Human Species*, passim.

that there exists some Power or Powers superior to himself; and (2) the conviction that there is a future life after death. These two doctrines may be said to be essential to any form of Religion: and even Herbert Spencer[1] in his *Autobiography* admits his belief that Religion, in some form, is indispensable to man, at least under present conditions. It has long been known, being taught alike by ancient heathen[2] philosophers and by Christian writers, that the chief distinction between man and the lower animals consists in his possessing the religious instinct. It is to the existence of this religious instinct that we must trace the fact that all nations have had their own religions. Hence it seems reasonable to infer that there must exist something corresponding to this religious instinct, and that it must be possible for man to be brought in some way to know the certainty of that in which he instinctively believes. When we compare religions with one another, we notice that they differ from each other in many particulars of the utmost importance, and that too not in appearance only but in reality. Pantheism, Polytheism, Dualism, Monotheism, Fetishism, are by no means, as some seem to think, different names for one and the same thing. They differ from one another as much as Astrology and Astronomy, as much as does the old Ptolemaic system of Astronomy

[1] *Autobiography*, vol. ii, p. 467; cf. p. 471.

[2] Cf. Plato, *Protagoras*; Lactantius, *Instit. Div.*; Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i, p. 238, and *Lectures on the Science of Language*, vol. ii, pp. 479 sqq.; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, c. xiii, *initio*.

from the Copernican. Some religions seem to have little or no connexion with morality, others inculcate it to some extent, others again make immoral actions an important part of their rites. Human sacrifices, for example, were once essential to the due performance of many of the religious ceremonies of our civilized Âryan forefathers in Asia and Europe alike, as they still are among some savage tribes. On the other hand, there are religions which teach, as does that of the Jainas, that it is sinful to slay anything that has life, even if it be a venomous insect. The rites of Mylitta[1] in ancient Babylon have their not very remote parallels in modern India and even among the Shî'ahs of Persia.[2] Some religions contend for the use of idols in worship, others deem idolatry a deadly sin. In some countries we find worship offered only to evil powers, in others such worship is strongly prohibited. Most faiths hold out the hope of a happy existence beyond the grave as the goal to be aimed at, but at least one system declares that the one thing to be sought is extinction. Hence, to conclude, as some men have done, that all religions are alike good, that they all lead to one goal, is at least as illogical as it would be to hold that all systems of medicine are equally beneficial, and that the old method of pouring boiling oil into gunshot wounds is as likely to

[1] Herodotus i. 199. Cf. what he says of a rite customary in Babylonia and Egypt in his day, to which the Indian rite entitled "Marriage with the God" presents a parallel (Herod. i. 181, 182).

[2] I refer to the so-called *muta'* or *ṣigheh* "marriages".

heal them as the modern treatment with aseptic dressings. The study of Comparative Religion should, if it does nothing else, at least banish such crude fancies as this from the minds of all reasoning men.

Although, however, we see that Religions differ very much among themselves, not only in many of their teachings but also in their aims and in the effect which they produce upon their professors, yet it by no means follows that, even in the worst of them, no truth is to be found. On the contrary, it is impossible to doubt that even the most corrupt and corrupting form of religion does contain some elements of truth, though we are sometimes obliged to confess that these are often so perverted that they serve only to commend the false teachings and the immoral actions which form part of some of the religious systems in which they are incorporated. But from Comparative Religion we learn that there are certain great and leading doctrines which are common in some form, if not to all religions, at least to the great majority of them. It was because of this fact that men at one time professed to be able to draw up a system of "Natural Religion". The attempt failed, because it was really based (not upon an extensive study of all religions, but) upon convictions which its authors had borrowed from the Christianity in which they had been brought up, and which, as a whole, they had rejected. Retaining, quite arbitrarily, those doctrines which suited their purpose, they endeavoured to find support for them, and for them alone, in certain

other systems of religion. In such a method there was nothing scientific, and it lacked the *proof* which was needed to give it permanence. None the less is it true that there are certain great principles which lie at the base of religion, and which we find more or less clearly taught, in some form or other, in almost all varieties of human belief. It is of importance to ascertain what these are, or at least the chief of them, for we must confess with Aristotle [1], and many others of the world's greatest thinkers, that the *consensus* of the large majority of men on such subjects has much weight, and should go far to prove the truth of their conclusions. It is on precisely the same ground that we accept the fact of man's universal conviction that he has a personal existence, and that the world cognizable to the senses really exists. It may of course be deemed possible to account for both these sets of convictions in some other way, but they are facts to be accounted for and not lightly disregarded.

Among the points in which an ultimate agreement exists among all religions are the following:—

(1) The existence of a God or gods.

(2) A future life, with rewards and punishments.

(3) The possibility of communion with the Unseen in prayer.

[1] Ὃ γὰρ πᾶσι δοκεῖ, τοῦτ' εἶναί φαμεν· ὃ δ' ἀναιρῶν ταύτην τὴν πίστιν οὐ πάνυ πιστότερα ἐρεῖ, Aristotle, *Eth. Nicom.* lib. x. 2. Cf. Cicero, *Tusc. Quaest.* i. 13; *De Nat. Deor.* 17; Hooker, *Eccl. Polity*, bk. i, cap. viii. 3.

(4) The value of Sacrifice.

(5) The fact of Sin, the conviction that it deserves punishment, and the need of seeking forgiveness.

(6) Man's need of a Revelation, and its possibility.

Many other points of agreement between certain religions have been pointed out, some of them correctly. In not a few cases, however, the apparent agreement vanishes when the facts are more carefully and dispassionately studied. As instances of this may be mentioned the supposed resemblance between the late Hindû fable of the *avatâras* of Vishnu (as a fish, a boar, &c.) and the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation; or again, the parallel which has incorrectly been drawn between the Egyptian and Hindû Triads of deities and the Christian Trinity, or the Legend of Perseus and the Virgin Birth of Christ. Not only are such comparisons due to want of careful study, but, even if they were well founded, the beliefs referred to cannot be said to be *universally* held in as clear a manner as are those already cited. Such resemblances are of great interest and deserve careful consideration, but they cannot rank with the points of agreement given above.

If we may accept Aristotle's rule to which we have already referred, we are led to infer that the whole human race is not in error in believing these six doctrines to be true and of immense importance to all men. But we are all doubtless aware that in various ways attempts have been made to explain away the force of

this universal, or *quasi*-universal, agreement among men. For example, it has been held that the idea of the existence of gods is due to dreams and to belief in ghosts. We are told that men have gradually risen from an original state of savagery, that at one time they had no religious beliefs or conceptions whatever, and that they developed them only by very slow degrees. It is affirmed that the supposed original savage had no clear idea of the difference between life and death, between sleeping and waking. Hence he entertained a conviction that his departed ancestors roamed about as uneasy ghosts. He owed this fancy, we are assured, to dreams in which he thought that he beheld them. According to this theory, therefore, the first gods worshipped were the ghosts of dead men. The doctrine of Evolution — all-potent name — is invoked to explain how from such vague ideas the conception of gods grew up, became ennobled and elevated, and gradually gave rise to every form of religion. This being supposed to be the true explanation of the matter, it is hence argued that we may safely dismiss religion from our minds.

In reply to all this it may be urged that to reject what is found among men everywhere, and which chiefly distinguishes them from the beasts, because of this or any other *theory* would be rash to an extreme degree. As well might we be required to dispense with clothing, civilization, language, and laws, because the supposed primaeval savage possessed none of these. All these things have been gradually evolved, we

will suppose, but they represent progress and are now necessary for our well-being. The same is true of religion, even on the Animistic (or Euhemeristic) theory of its origin.

But again, this theory is but a *theory* and cannot claim to have been proved. No savage race has ever yet been discovered devoid of a belief in the supernatural, and proof that any such race has ever existed is still lacking. Were one such semi-human tribe found, it would be hard to show that it represented the earliest condition of mankind, and that this particular tribe had not degenerated in this respect and thus lost an earlier belief in some superior being or beings. Moreover, it is a fact that it is some of the *higher* forms of religion and not the lower that speak of the Divine as *spiritual*, and that our own word *ghost* has degenerated in meaning from its earlier and loftier signification. Many of the savages of to-day distinguish clearly between the ghosts of their ancestors, even when made objects of worship, and the gods in whom they believe. Regarding the latter they affirm that they were never men and *never died*. The Accadians of old called one of their chief deities *En-lil*, "lord of the whirlwind" or "of the simoom", but we have no proof that they believed him to be the wraith of a dead man. As a generic term the word for a god was *ana*, which also denoted "heaven", "the sky," whereas the abode of the dead was supposed to be the *Underworld*. In ancient Egypt, too, the word used for "god" (*nuter*), whatever its derivation, has no connexion with any term denoting a ghost.

In all the Semitic languages the word for "God" (*él*, *îlu*, *iláh*, *elôah*) may *possibly* be derived from a root signifying "strength", but it certainly does not mean a ghost. The most usual word for "god" in the oldest Aryan tongues (*deva*, *θεός*, *deus*) comes from a root meaning "to shine", and can therefore have no connexion with

> "The witching time of night
> When churchyards yawn."[1]

Besides all this, before the supposed original savage could evolve the idea of a god from a ghost, he must have got the conception of a ghost from somewhere or other. *This implies that he already possessed belief in an after-life.* To believe that he had no knowledge of the difference between sleeping and waking, life and death, requires a degree of credulity on our part in excess of that which most men can claim. If he was at all like modern savages, he probably lived largely on the produce of the chase, and at least occasionally waged war with his enemies, as even civilized men have sometimes been known to do. In either case he would have ample means of learning whether he was asleep or awake; and he must have known of the existence of death before he could form the resolution to hunt his prey or to fight his enemies. Even in peace a time would come when bitter experience would teach him that his loved ones were mortal, and he would have to bury his dead out of his sight, or otherwise dispose of their bodies. There are many difficulties therefore in the way of our accepting the theory of

[1] *Hamlet*, Act iii, sc. 2.

Animism. Nor, were we to accept it, would it justify us in rejecting all man's religious thoughts and hopes as empty dreams.

It is only in modern times that any one has ventured to say that belief in a future life is the last enemy which has to be destroyed in the progress of the human race. The attempt to accomplish this will at least be a very difficult one, bound up as the belief is with the very earliest and strongest convictions of all mankind. Nor can retrogression to a point of view anterior to that of even the imagined primitive savage be logically regarded as in any sense "progress".

We may well wonder how man ever arrived at the belief that anything survives death. Even the Accadians spoke of Hades as "*Mad-Nugaa*", "the land of no return," while poets, ancient and modern alike, tell of "the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns".[1] To all outward appearance death ended all: there seemed no proof to the contrary, while all the evidence of the senses and all human experience appeared to give the lie to man's innate hope of a future life. Yet in some way the belief in a life after death not only arose but lived on in the minds of men of every race, manifesting itself not only in the once almost universal worship of ancestors, but also in various other forms, of which the habit of burying horses, arms, and slaves with a dead chief, among uncivilized tribes, and that of mummifying the dead and of erecting magnificent tombs over

[1] *Hamlet*, Act iii, sc. 1. Cf. Sophocles, *Ajax*, v. 609, τὸν ἀπότροπον ἄδηλον Ἅιδαν.

them in Egypt are examples. It may be safely affirmed that, in spite of every effort that has been made to account for the origin of this belief without the hypothesis of a primaeval revelation in some form or other, we are as yet quite unable to explain how it was possible for man everywhere and always to attain to and retain the conviction that life did not end nor human personality perish at death. Interesting as it would be to solve this problem, the matter which it is of importance for us here to notice is that belief in an after-life is practically universal and has been so from the earliest known period in the history of the human race. This is a *fact*, however we may try to account for it.

Into the attempts which have been made to explain away the significance of the cardinal points of man's universal creed we cannot now enter. Suffice it to say that, however these beliefs originated, they exist and must be dealt with. The fact that they have commended themselves to the vast majority of men in every age and in every nation lends strong support to the theory that these are *innate ideas*. Whether this be so or not, it is hard to convince ourselves, even if we try to do so, that the whole human race can have been deceived in matters of such vital importance. This would be to oppose the theory of evolution in religious matters, or at least to render it devoid of meaning, object, and goal. To assert that communion with God in prayer offered "in spirit and in truth" is "unthinkable", that Sin is a mere phantom of the imagination, that conscience is a delusion and

Revelation a logical impossibility, is to affirm what is evidently contrary to the all but universal conclusion of the human intellect. Hence the unbiased inquirer will conclude, with such men as Aristotle and Butler, that to hold that to be false which "the general and perpetual voice of men" declares to be true is to be guilty of extreme presumption, and is in the highest degree irrational. Life and death are certainties, good and evil are certainties, conscience is a universal fact in human experience, and these things are not only quite consonant with the truth of the six articles already mentioned, but even seem to require them to be true in order in any degree to explain their existence, however imperfectly. And when we find that the human race as a whole has, even from the earliest times known to us, been unanimous in holding these doctrines, by whatever means they attained to the knowledge of them, we must admit that this is a fact of the utmost importance in the science of Comparative Religion, and that it goes far towards confirming the truth of these beliefs.

But it must be confessed that, for the satisfaction of our intellects, the removal of our doubts, the giving of rest to our hearts, the practical guidance of our lives, and the soothing of our griefs, we require something more than this. We need not merely a high degree of probability but absolute certainty. It is not enough for us to feel confident that there are beings superior to men, or even that there is "a power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness". Our

hearts long to find a means of being brought into touch, as it were, with the heart of a Heavenly Father who loves us, and of whose existence those Ethnic faiths which, in a lower sense it is true, give the title of father[1] to some of their gods afford us some hope. Nothing else will give us peace. We need also to be convinced on irrefragable evidence, not only that there is such a Being, but that He is wise, just, merciful, omnipotent, omnipresent, holy, and good, that He cares for us, and that, though conscience justly condemns us, yet, in some way consistent with both justice and mercy, it is possible to obtain assurance of pardon and acceptance with Him, and to have our wills brought into harmony with His. It is not enough to know what deeds are evil and what good: that has always been in a measure known to nearly all men, savage and civilized alike, as all the world's great moral codes show by their agreement with one another on so many points. We require besides this a motive-power at once strong and *unselfish* enough to enable and incline us, contrary to our inherent tendency to evil, to choose and to do what we know to be right. And we want *proof*, not only logical but historical, not only comprehensible to the learned, but able to be apprehended equally by wise and foolish, by learned and unlearned alike, even by little children, by savage and civilized, by man because he is man, independently of his varying circumstances, without distinction of race, class, or sex, on the one condition of his

[1] Cf. the Old Norse title of *Alfadhir* given to Odhin.

possessing a really heartfelt desire not to merely *know* but to *do*[1] God's will. Nothing less than all this *can*, nothing else *should*, satisfy the human mind, the human heart. The question is, Where is all this to be found?

Students of the Ethnic religions must confess that these things are to be found neither in any of them separately nor in all of them combined. Not one of them has any evidence in support of its claims, if we except that which is afforded by their general agreement upon the leading points already specified. Historical evidence they have none. If we take Islâm, for example, one of the few great religions of which we can trace the origin, we find that it rests entirely on the *ipse dixit* of Muḥammad. Other proof it does not possess. Its founder's own life was, at least in its latter part, a series of transgressions of the Moral Law, transgressions which he asserted to be sanctioned by the God who had chosen him to be His Apostle, who had created the universe solely on his account, and whose ideal of humanity was Muḥammad himself. If we examine its most exalted dogma, the Oneness of God, we find Him to be the deification of might and caprice, destitute of Love and Holiness, separated from His creatures by a gulf across which no touch of sympathy, no feeling of kinship, can ever stretch. The Muḥammadan conception of God is that of an Almighty but unscrupulous Oriental despot[2]: it is *toto caelo*

[1] Cf. John vii. 17, R. V.

[2] *Vide* my *Religion of the Crescent* and Rev. Dr. Zwemer's *Moslem Doctrine of God.*

different from the Christian. The result of the teachings of Islâm, wherever they have been carried into practice, is evident in the mental, moral, and spiritual ruin of the lands where that religion has long reigned with undisputed sway. When we turn to the ancient religion of Greece, of Phoenicia, or to the modern faith of the Hindû, we find such immoral tales of the gods, such cruel rites, such obscene and depraved practices taught (as in the *Tantras* and in the religious ceremonies of the "Left-hand" worshippers in India) as are utterly opposed to the moral sense of humanity. The conception of the nature of the gods and goddesses in all these and many other religions is extremely low and unworthy, as even the philosophers of ancient times perceived in reference to their national religions. Philosophy doubtless differs from religion in many respects and must not be confounded with it, though in the case of Hindûism at least it has exerted a powerful influence upon the beliefs not only of the educated classes but also of the mass of the people. But in heathen lands philosophy has arisen from the consciousness that religion is corrupt, and in India it has endeavoured to modify men's thoughts of the Divine. Hence, perhaps, in great measure the Pantheism which pervades and underlies Indian Polytheism. But even when a noble thought has occurred to the mind of one of these ancient thinkers, men have been unable to develop it in such a way as to elevate and purify men's conceptions of God and of man's relation to Him. As an example we take

the Yoga doctrine of the Hindûs. This teaches that the one thing man needs is union with God. Surely this at first sight seems a noble thought. Yet to understand it aright we have to inquire what is meant by God, and in what union with Him consists. The exponents of the Yoga school inform us that the Deity is the Universal Soul (called *Purusha*), and that the human soul should, as its highest good, seek to be literally *absorbed* and swallowed up therein. This is to be done by reflecting deeply on the *Purusha*, by repeating the mystic syllable *ôm*, by suppressing the breath, and by a process of self-concentration which is materially helped by fixing the eyes on the tip of one's own nose and striving to get rid of all thought. The practical result of this is that, the nearer the devotee approaches to absolute vacuity of mind,—in other words to idiotcy,—the more nearly does he attain to the "union" at which he aims. The Yogî devotee is still a not unfamiliar object in India; sitting almost naked with matted locks by the roadside he affords a spectacle of degradation hardly exceeded by the lowest savage. In other religions we find a confusion of the moral with the immoral: we find innocent actions condemned as sin and crimes contrary to nature claiming a Divine sanction. Buddhism of the purest type speaks of bestiality [1] as far less heinous than for a Buddhist monk to return to family life. Later Esoteric Buddhism in India, as taught in the *Guhya-samagha*, is thus

[1] *Mahâvaggo* i, cap. 78, § 2; *Antamaso tiracchânagatâya.*

spoken of by an Indian writer[1] of authority: "Theories are indulged in and practices enjoined which are at once the most revolting and horrible that human depravity could think of." Shî'ah Muḥammadanism, on the authority of certain traditional sayings of Muḥammad, sanctions and approves of a form of religious prostitution known as *mut'ah* or *ṣîgheh*. Other examples are not far to seek. Even Socrates, if we may believe Plato and Xenophon, spoke of unmentionable vices in a manner which showed that he entirely failed to perceive their heinousness. This was doubtless due to the moral miasma which surrounded him, and is one of the best proofs, were proof needed, that Ethnic religions, in spite of certain great truths *hidden* rather than taught in them, cannot raise humanity even in thought.

We see then that Ethnic religions cannot satisfy the yearnings of men's hearts for a God whom we can love and serve, whose character reflects the demands of the moral law of Conscience. Neither Muḥammadan Monotheism, Hindû Pantheism, nor Greek and Roman Polytheism can for one moment reveal to us the God whom man needs to know. Examination of these and many other creeds has shown that they have neither internal nor external evidences in support of their claims.

It is true that sometimes in books of the various Ethnic religions, and still more frequently in the writings of the philosophers and

[1] Râjendralâla Mitra, *Introduction to the Lalita-Vistara*, pp. 11 sqq.

poets who lived in the lands where these religions once held sway or still prevail, we find true and noble sentiments and lofty moral precepts. This must be thankfully admitted, for it shows, as aged Nestor's son in the *Odyssey* tells us, that "all men naturally thirst for the gods",[1] or rather for God Himself. But the existence of these sentiments cannot be said to afford any proof of the truth of the Ethnic religions under which such men lived, and against the false teachings and degrading rites of which their souls uttered such hopeless cries of protest. Something remotely resembling the Golden Rule of Christ has been found[2] in Confucius, in the *Dhammapadam*, in the *Hitopadeša*, in Aristotle, Thales, Plato, and others: and in the Egyptian "Precepts of Ptaḥ-ḥotep", composed some 3,600 years before our own era, we find a father saying to his son, "When thou art powerful after me, my son, act according to God's pleasure."[3] But in translating such precepts into English, however literally they may be rendered, we are apt to forget that we read a great deal of Christianity into them, since the English language has become, as it were, *christened*. In the last quotation, for example, if we would understand it aright, we must inquire what

[1] Πάντες δὲ θεῶν χατέουσ' ἄνθρωποι (*Od.* iii. 48).

[2] Vide my *Noble Eightfold Path*, pp. 171–173.

[3] "Ar unen-ek em sa-â âqer, ar-ek se-â nes ma em âm nuter." (Papyrus Prisse.) We cannot here instance the so-called Druidical *Triads*, for they were not reduced to writing until many centuries after the introduction of Christianity into these islands, and must have been powerfully influenced thereby.

conception an ancient Egyptian polytheist had of "God". Between the Christian and the heathen significance of that word there yawns a chasm that cannot be bridged. This is easily seen if we remember what has been said above about the Hindû idea of "Union" with "God". But the great defect in all these systems is that, however noble some of their precepts may be—though the good ones are few in comparison with the number of evil precepts to be found in them,—yet all Ethnic religions *lack the motive power* which is required to enable men to put their good precepts in practice. A Buddhist priest in Ceylon many years ago expressed this very clearly. When asked what seemed to him the great difference between Buddhism and Christianity, he said, "Buddhism contains noble maxims, as do Christianity and doubtless many other religions. But the difference between our religion and yours is this: we know what we ought to do, but have no power to do it; *you have that power* which we have not." A line of rail may be admirably laid down and the railway carriages may be all placed on it and ready for a journey, but, if there be no steam or electric power to propel them, the journey cannot be performed in them.[1]

[1] In some non-Christian codes of morality there is such a motive power as patriotism, devotion to one's superiors, or even selfishness. But non-Christian *religions* never seem to supply the motive. The Bushido system of Japan is non-religious; patriotism and devotion to the feudal lord form its motives, but it inculcates not only self-sacrifice and courage but also the duty of revenge and suicide in certain cases. These defects must be noted. We cannot dwell on

One religion, and one religion alone, undoubtedly satisfies all the requirements which we have mentioned. It appeals not to one nation only or in particular, but to all; not to one special class of society, but to every member of the human race. Its power of raising the fallen, of comforting the sorrowful, of giving birth to self-sacrifice, of supplying an object and aim for a noble life, of calling forth all that is highest and best in human nature, has been proved not in one age but in many, not in one country but in all. It has well been said, "Over and above our Four Gospels there is a fifth, already nineteen chapters long, and every chapter is a century, of Christian lives and Christian deaths." These are *facts*, however we may account for them. Christianity has succeeded where every other religion has failed. It has evidences of other kinds also. It is not based on fancies or theories, but on the *facts* of an actual, historical human life. All the six great leading doctrines which we have seen to be common to all other religions are taught in Christianity also, but unmixed with corruptions and immoral teaching. We find sacrifice, for instance, recognized in the one true sacrifice once offered for the sins of the whole world in Christ's life and Christ's death. Instead of the abominations of human sacrifice and of men and women giving themselves up as ἱερόδουλοι and such-like to an immoral life in

this system here, for we are now dealing with Comparative Religion, not with different codes of morals. Vide an excellent article on "Bushido" in the C. M. S. *Intelligencer* for Oct., 1905.

honour of their gods and goddesses, we find it enjoined on Christians to present their bodies as "a living sacrifice, *holy*, acceptable to God",[1] and to be "faithful unto death".[2] Thus Christianity gives the key to the great universal instinct which asserts the value of sacrifice. In heathen religions it seems unmeaning, it is often revolting and leads to inhuman cruelty and unmentionable vileness: in the Christian it commends itself alike to reason and conscience, and satisfies men's yearning for communion with God in heart and life. In innumerable other instances also, Christianity answers the questionings of the human heart, turning to good and noble ends instincts which in every Ethnic religion lead to evil.

Man needs proof of God's existence, holiness, and love. The Ethnic faiths, among all their multitude of male and female divinities, offer us none whom men of enlightened conscience can worship, few whom they can admire, not one in whom they can believe. What are we to think of a Zeus, a Śiva, a Venus, a Baal,—or even of the God depicted for us in the Qur'ân? We can no longer worship the Odhin or the Thor of our own ancestors, nor fall prostrate before the bestial deities of ancient Egypt, or the immoral Ishtar of Babylonia. How different a conception is presented in "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort"![3] Christ's whole character *proves* the existence of God: nay more, the only Deity who can and does fully satisfy

[1] Rom. xii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 5. [2] Rev. ii. 10.
[3] 2 Cor. i. 3.

all the needs of our reason, heart, and conscience, is the God whom in His life and character Christ has revealed. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."[1] Here again Christianity reveals the truth which underlies heathen error. We can see that under the deadly error of Pantheism there is concealed the existence of the omnipresent God in whom "we live and move and have our being".[2] Even the horrible old Chaldaean legend of how the god Bel cut off his own head and mingled his blood with the clay out of which man was made, and the somewhat similar Sanskrit story of the sacrifice of Purusha[3], come to have a meaning to the Christian which they never could have had to the heathen, when we remember that God has "chosen us to be partakers of the Divine Nature[4]" in virtue of spiritual union with Christ, "who is our life[5]." We need proof that God is merciful as well as just, that He hears prayer, that He is holy and loving: and Christ's whole life is a still better proof of all this than even His verbal teaching of these truths. As Tennyson sings[6]:

"And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;
Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef."

[1] John xiv. 9. [2] Acts xvii. 28.
[3] And the Scandinavian legend of Ymir's death; and again, the Chinese tale of the death of Pw'ân-kù.
[4] 2 Pet. i. 4. [5] Col. iii. 4.
[6] *In Memoriam*, xxxvi.

We ask what proof there is of a life after death, and we are presented with the best authenticated fact in the whole history of the world, the Resurrection of our Lord, that stupendous historical *fact* upon which the whole Christian faith was founded. That Sin exists hardly needs proof beyond the testimony of our consciences, the spectacle of the world as it is to-day, and such scenes as still occur even in lands called in irony "Christian". But, were further proof of its existence required, where could a greater be found than in the murder of the one Perfect Man who "went about doing good"?[1]—the greatest crime in history. Men have everywhere felt their need of a Revelation and believed in its possibility. In Christ we have that Revelation, the most perfect conceivable—not merely the words of a man claiming to speak in the name of God, but the *life* and *works* as well as the *words* of one who revealed the Father, and who has given us a conception of God such that, whether we accept it or not, we must confess it to be the only one which it is possible for any one who knows it to believe in. Even Renan says, "The highest consciousness of God which has ever existed in the bosom of humanity has been that of Jesus."[2]

We need a motive power sufficiently strong to make us not only *desire* to do good but to *do* it. Ovid voices the experience not only of men like himself in their better moments but of the

[1] Acts x. 38. [2] *Vie de Jésus*, p. 75.

best of humanity outside Christianity when he says:

"Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor."

The motive afforded us should appeal not to our lower nature but to our higher. The noblest and most unselfish human feeling is love,—love of country, the love of parents for their children, of a wife for her husband, of friend for friend. No Ethnic religion appeals to this. They all appeal to fear, to self-interest; they offer a licentious Paradise like the Muḥammadan, or promise escape from suffering and at the same time from personality and existence, as in the Hindu *moksha* and the Buddhist *nirvâna*. Christianity alone makes *love*[1] the motive power which leads to a life of noble aims and self-sacrificing efforts for the good of others. "The love of Christ constraineth us, thus judging that One died for all . . . ; and He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again."[2] Nor need we go back to Apostolic times for examples of the lives which are rendered possible by such a motive. We have not yet had time to forget Dr. Barnardo.

But here we meet with an objection which has great influence on thought in our own time. We are told that the comparative study of Reli-

[1] "There are noble sentiments in Plato and Aristotle and Epictetus, in Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, but there is no such Gospel of Love as that in the New Testament." (Sir John Lubbock, *The Use of Life*, p. 294.)

[2] 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

gion does indeed prove that Christianity has much in common with other religions, nay more, that the analogies which exist between certain leading doctrines of Christianity and those found scattered here and there in other faiths are so close that we are driven to conclude that the Christian is, just like all other religions, merely the evolution of human thought, or, as some would say, the growth of superstition and ignorance. It cannot be a Divine Revelation, we are told, since some at least of the doctrines which we fondly fancied to be peculiar to it are found elsewhere.

Now this whole argument is one in which the conclusion is not only not logically deducible from the premisses but is even incompatible with them. The fact that some of the doctrines of Christianity bear a certain, often immensely exaggerated, resemblance to those contained in other religions serves to show that the Christian faith is intended, not for angels, nor for the inhabitants of an Utopia, but for actual human beings. On the hypothesis that the Ethnic religions are entirely the product of men's minds, the fact that Christianity adapts itself to what man has in all ages instinctively believed on these points, while it eliminates all the errors and evil principles mixed with these doctrines in Ethnic faiths, is quite consistent with its being the revelation of One who knew men's spiritual needs and wished to satisfy them. But if we hold that God has never left Himself without a witness[1] in men's hearts, that the True

[1] Acts xiv. 17.

Light, fully manifested in the fulness of time in Jesus Christ, in some measure "lighteth every man coming into the world",[1] and that conscience and the religious instinct are evidences of this, then we are led to the conclusion that all the dimly apprehended truths in the Ethnic faiths are foreshadowings of the truth as it is in Jesus, foregleams of the dawning of the Sun of Righteousness. It is impossible to believe that Christianity, rising at the time and in the country where we know from history that it did, was an eclectic philosophy[2], devised by a sage who was deeply versed in Comparative Religion. This Science was then as unknown as Geology or Palaeontology. It would be far easier to believe that these sciences then flourished in Palestine than that Comparative Religion did. The greatest philosophers of India and of Greece were unable to purify the religion of even their own lands, to preserve the elements of truth which it contained, and to eliminate all that was false, cruel, and degrading in it. They could neither reveal God nor give men an adequate motive for serving Him. This is well known to all scholars. Christ has done all this and much more; and yet it is not merely His verbal teaching that has changed the world, not what He said nor even altogether what He did, but what He *was*, what He *is*: for true Christianity is life in the living Christ, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."[3]

[1] John i. 9. This is one possible rendering of the original.
[2] Vide *Religio Critici*, cap. iii, pp. 57 sqq.
[3] Heb. xiii. 8.

The objection which we are considering amounts to the direct negative of Aristotle's rule that an opinion accepted by all is true. It is easily seen that the objection is confuted by experience, as a few examples will suffice to show. Love of one's offspring and self-sacrifice in order to provide for and protect them are found not only in man but also in the lower animals. If the objection has any weight, it follows that it is our duty to show that we are superior to the brutes by casting out this feeling from our hearts, because of its universality. If this argument is not conclusive, on what principle should we reject belief in an after-life, for instance, because that doctrine seems to be universal among men and instinctive to humanity? Undoubtedly it *is* taught in the Christian faith as well as in others, but the Gospel alone contains the *proof* of its truth. Were the doctrine *omitted* from the Gospel, men might well assert that the Christian faith was untrue to human nature and unsatisfying to our instinctive longing for a life to come. Conscience, again, is found in all men, and certain moral precepts are known to all nations. As instances of this universally known moral law, Aristotle refers to those rules, everywhere instinctively recognized [1], which enjoin respect for parents, kindness to friends, and gratitude to one's benefactors. Does the

[1] Τὸ γονέας τιμᾶν καὶ φίλους εὖ ποιεῖν καὶ τοῖς εὐεργέταις χάριν ἀποδιδόναι, ταῦτα καὶ τὰ τούτοις ὅμοια οὐ προστάττουσι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οἱ γεγραμμένοι νόμοι ποιεῖν, ἀλλ' εὐθὺς ἀγράφῳ καὶ κοινῷ νόμῳ νομίζεται. (Aristot. *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, cap. ii.)

universality of these show that they should be rejected?

If Christianity *denied* all the doctrines which we now find to be in a measure common to all religions, that fact would be a strong argument against its claim to be the final revelation of the God whom it represents as having never left Himself without a witness in men's hearts. Surely therefore the Gospel *assertion* of these truths tells the other way. Christianity is proved to be the Absolute Religion by its suitability to the spiritual needs of all men everywhere, by its containing all the good and none of the evil found in other religions, and above all by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. In the words of Strauss, "Christ is the one character without the idea of whom in the mind personal piety is impossible." Once more, let it never be forgotten that Christianity rests upon historical *facts*, not on uncertain traditions, noble sentiments, or pious hopes.

We are now in a position to solve the second part of the Problem of Comparative Religion: "In what relation does Christianity stand to those widely and almost universally accepted beliefs which we have discovered to exist in some form in almost every religion in the world?" Our answer is this: Christianity is the key which unlocks the deepest mysteries, such as sacrifice, contained in the Ethnic religions. It is the fulfilment of all their unconscious prophecies, the answer to all their deepest questionings, and the solution of their darkest problems. It confirms all the truths taught in an imperfect form in

these Ethnic faiths. It is the republication of what has been termed Natural Religion. It adduces proofs, at once historical, moral, and experimental, of its lofty claims. It supplies the motive power which was and is lacking in all other religious systems, and by the revelation of God's love in Christ it appeals to the noblest and most unselfish as well as the most universal of human sentiments. It connects Religion with Morality, sets Conscience in its proper place of supremacy, makes holiness possible, and brings reason into accord with spiritual instinct. Without the Gospel revelation of Christ, the study of Comparative Religion would disclose to us the spectacle of men's highest hopes unsatisfied, their loftiest aims unattained and unattainable, their expectations disappointed, their prophecies unfulfilled. The reason for the very existence of religion in any form would be an insoluble problem. The arch of humanity would lack its keystone without "Jesus Christ the chief corner stone".[1]

This being so, the solution of the Problem of Comparative Religion affords us yet one more reason for purifying and supplementing the Ethnic faiths that still linger in many lands, by giving to those who profess them that which we now know to be God's answer to men's deepest Guesses at Truth.

[1] Eph. ii. 20; cf. Ps. cxviii. 22; Is. xxviii. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 6.

THE PROBLEM OF REVELATION

Rev. W. C. Allen, M.A.

The problem of Revelation in connexion with Christianity can be stated in the short question, "Discovery or Revelation?" There is, that is to say, existing as a part of life as we know it, a doctrine of God and of God as revealed in Christ. Whence did this come? Was it evolved in the unaided upward progress of man's thought, ever refining and purifying less spiritual conceptions of supposed forces in nature, and of man's needs, or is it rather the still imperfectly apprehended truth about a personal God who is controlling and guiding the entire mechanism of the universe, and training men to enter into communion with Himself? If we could forget for awhile some inseparable aspects of this doctrine, and constitute ourselves impartial and uninterested spectators of history, it might be possible to trace the development of the Christian conception of God in terms of *discovery*. We should watch its growth exactly as we investigate the rise and progress of political institutions, or of aesthetic standards of taste, or of ethical systems of conduct. From the rude conjectures of primitive peoples, attributing to the forces of nature the same kind of qualities which they observed to be characteristic of themselves, we should rise to a stage of society in which these personified natural forces were worshipped as supernatural beings. As national superseded less organized communities of men,

we should find the idea of unity so affecting the conception of national deities that particular peoples attributed to one such deity the qualities that had hitherto been divided amongst many. Our attention would then be drawn to the Jewish people in particular. Amongst that remarkable race we should find the conception of a national God being expanded and purified until it culminated in the supremely splendid conception of God as a moral Being, the Creator of the universe. We should pass to the Christian era and observe that men in the first century A. D. accomplished a most remarkable practical heightening of religious ideals when they gathered up abstract conceptions of the Supreme Ruler of the universe,—all the many primitive and current conceptions of channels of approaching Him, all methods in which the craving of men for union with Him had found partial expression,—and made them at once supremely spiritual and yet supremely practical by focusing them in an idealized personality—that of God incarnate in Jesus the Messiah. From that period we should notice that advance in the development of the idea of God seemed stayed. The whole future of Christianity would seem to us rather as an unfulfilled striving after the ideal thus projected, a falling short of professed belief.

Along lines like these some attempt might be made to explain Christianity in terms of *discovery*; as the invention, or rather as the creation, of the restless inquiring mind of man, ever seeking to give expression to inborn cravings for communion with the infinite, and to escape from the

unsatisfying contemplation of his own isolated individuality by merging himself in the comprehensive and the universal. Now to such a rationalizing "explanation" of Christianity as due to the inventive and idealizing capacities of man objections might of course be urged from the standpoint of philosophy. It might be argued, *either* that the explanation must go further, that such spiritual creations or discoveries of man corresponded to real existences, that man's discovery of God was explained by the existence of God, *or* that the very term "discovery" was one-sided and question-begging because the existence of God is a necessary postulate of thought, and man's discovery of God would much more correctly be described as God's revelation of Himself to man. I do not, however, wish to raise the metaphysical argument to-night. It lies outside my purpose. I rather wish to point out some features in the history of Christianity which are not adequately accounted for by any explanation in terms of human discovery or invention, and which are only fully explained on the supposition that the Christian doctrine of God in Christ is due to the self-revelation of a personal God controlling and guiding the course of human history. I have nothing new to say. All that I can offer is a restatement of familiar points from the point of view which has become natural to me after some years' study of the historical development of Biblical Christianity.

And I wish first of all to call your attention to the Old Testament presentation of the conception of God, and particularly to

two aspects of it. Much has recently been written, or rather rewritten, concerning the supposed immorality of the character of God as there presented. I cannot now stay to deal with what seem to me to be very often childish and inadequately conceived misrepresentations of the nature of the God so movingly pictured in that literature. I shall simply assume that we are dealing with God as described in the highest, not in the lowest terms there used, and that the general conception with which one rises from a complete perusal of the whole literature is a lofty conception of God as eternal yet living, all-powerful yet moral, all-wise yet condescending to man's weakness, just yet forgiving, the ultimate source of all things, in whom men live and move and have their being. Did the Jews discover God or did He reveal Himself to them? The answer comes to us in no uncertain terms if we are willing to admit the testimony of these writers as a factor to be taken into consideration. For running all through the presentation of God's nature and being is the key-note, the motive, of *revelation*. Lawgiver and prophet, historian and psalmist, all alike are clearly conscious of the fact that the God whom they worship and proclaim was not found by them, but was finding them, had not been evolved by inference and observation, by conjecture and speculation, but had revealed Himself to them, unfit and unwilling though they often enough felt themselves to be to hear His voice, and to convey His messages. "I was no prophet," says the earliest writing prophet, "and the Lord took me, and said unto

me, Go, prophesy." "He said unto me," writes Ezekiel, "Son of Man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee." "Ah, Lord God," says the prophet Jeremiah, "behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go." This note of compulsion, this consciousness of delivering a message from One imperfectly apprehended, of being an agent in the hands of One mightier than the speaker, runs all through the Old Testament, and must be taken into account. It is not that it occurs here and there. It is like the atmosphere which softens and beautifies the whole landscape. It might no doubt be paralleled in some degree from other religious histories, but taken as a whole in its uniform consistency, and in connexion with the supremely beautiful conception of God delivered under these conditions, I cannot but return again and again to the explanation that He of whom the prophets spake was no ideal evolved by moral craving and half-metaphysical speculation from their own consciousness of life, but was the personal and living God flashing upon their consciousness such reflections of His own being as they could receive. *Revelation*, not *discovery*, is the only adequate explanation of the facts of the religious consciousness of the Old Testament.

And, once again, a second aspect of the Old Testament conception of God is its prophetic character. Many of us have long ago ceased to find spiritual food in that presentation of prophecy which so delighted the early apologists. We no

longer believe that ancient writers projected into the future obscure utterances, that at a distant period the Son of God might come into the world, and by fulfilling them strike conviction of His own divine mission into the hearts of men. But again and again we return to the reasoned conviction, that, read as a whole, the Old Testament presentation of God is prophetic in a sense which, when viewed in the light of its fulfilment, creates in the mind an overpowering conviction that we are dealing with the purposed, intelligent self-revelation of a personal divine Being. For in spite of their possession of a great and splendid conception of God, the Old Testament writers of the closing period of the Canon seem to dwell in an atmosphere of anticipation of a fuller revelation, and to display a waiting and expectant habit of mind. Is it with regard to their conception of the God who, as they assure us, had made Himself known to them? The great teachers assure us that they are conscious of the divine life of God, that it is possible to obey and serve Him, that when they called He answered, that to love Him is the true end of the life of man. But they are also clear that a fuller revelation of God is in store for mankind. Not yet was the earth "full of the knowledge of the Lord", but in the future "all men should know Him, from the least to the greatest". Then, in a sense not yet realized, He would be their God and they His people. Or is it the condition of the world and of the Jewish nation? It was, they believed, in a transitory stage of development. The prophetic forecast of the nation's future took the form, as is known, of

the Messianic kingdom. In that kingdom every national institution should reach its ideal form. The king should be one who realized in perfection all the qualities which kingship connoted. As prophet, priest, teacher, he was to combine in one all the qualities and functions which in history had often been found apart. In his universal kingdom all nations would find a place. Side by side with this forecast of the future, other aspects of the national experience gave rise to anticipations of a different character, which are also prophetic in their expectancy. The Jewish people suffered much, and some among them learned that in the providence of God suffering for sin may be a means of moral redemption, not only of the sufferer but of others. Thus there grew up the great conception of the redemption of the world through suffering, as embodied in Isa. liii. This, too, at the close of the Old Testament period was prophetic, for not yet was the world redeemed. And again, there is the anticipation of fuller light on the after-life. The conviction of a life of communion with God after death seems to be almost on the lips of Old Testament writers, though with rare exceptions they nowhere give it clear expression. In these and in many other aspects the Old Testament teachers are like men who view from afar the sunlit summits of the hills of a promised country, and die with their faces turned towards it. They are thus prophetic of a fuller and clearer revelation of the Divine love and mercy, witnesses of the approaching break of a new morning in the world's history, of which they themselves can see

only the first tremors of sunrise. Thus the Old Testament, in its consciousness of divine revelation and in its prophetic expectancy of more light, witnesses to the fact that we are dealing with a personal God guiding intelligently and consciously the course of history.

Of course the real difficulty here, to us moderns, is the limited scope of that revelation. Jewish history runs back but some few centuries. But what of the earlier centuries of which historical research can find scanty records? What of the still earlier ages running back to the first emergence upon the earth of human life? Where was the divine Being during all these many centuries? Was primitive man unworthy of His regard? Why did He wait till late in human history before revealing Himself to men? The answer, I suppose, must be found in a confession of ignorance. *Why* God ever did or does anything is beyond our ken. Why He created the world; why He allowed it to develop as He did; why He held back, as it were, His revelation of Himself till late in history; why He revealed Himself more fully to the Jews than to other people; all this we cannot say, because obviously the ways of divine intelligence are only partially apprehended by finite minds. But we may observe what He did, and one certain inference from such observation is that we are sure that, from the first beginning of sentient life, He was always in some measure revealing Himself to men as they could bear it, that at no age, however remote, was He far absent from His creatures, and that none ever called without receiving in

ways adapted to his needs a gracious and merciful answer.

But I must pass to the New Testament. And I shall assume here, what I believe to be a reasonable result of investigation into its literature, that we have enshrined in it a true impression of the historical life of Jesus the Messiah. I mean by this something very far different from the belief that every detail of the New Testament and every statement in it is literally and verbally true to fact. But without going into detail, my own belief is this, that the man of average intelligence who reads the New Testament and takes it for a faithful presentation of that life, though he will make many mistakes, is much nearer to the truth than the person who, misled by apparent inconsistencies, doubts altogether the faithfulness of the narrative. I return ever and again to the belief that in a most remarkable way the New Testament presents us with a picture of the life of Christ which is in all essentials a faithful representation of it.

What, then, were the impressions left upon those who have left records of the life of the Christ? In the first place an impression of *power*, Jesus the Messiah had been a source of healing and of life. They had seen the disease-stricken peasants come to Him and go away rejoicing. "He bore," says one evangelist, "our sicknesses and carried our diseases." And the secret of His power they felt sure lay in His personality. He used no drugs, no magical incantations. But He Himself was pure and healthy, and sound of mind and body, and

healing influence flowed from Him. Nor was He a healer of physical disease alone. There are worse things in life than that. He had power over the moral cancer, sin. They remembered that contact with Him had given them moral freedom. Doubt of mind, slavery of evil habit, despondency and despair,—these things ceased where He was. The reason, they knew, was because He was King and Master of His life, and from Him flowed life and power into other men's lives. From fear of evil demons, from moral bondage, from remorse and pessimism,—from these things He had redeemed men. He was in truth the divine Saviour. We may sum up all this by saying that the impression left upon them was that He was powerful over all the hostile element in life. But it was not only that He had power. Many a man in some degree has fought a good fight against evil. He *was* power. In other words, His personality did not only contain an element of power, He was power infinitely extended, so that no question could ever arise whether He could do this or that. He represented—was, potentially—power personified. "We preach," said St. Paul, "Christ, the power of God." Or, once again, the impression left upon them was one of love. "He loved us," says St. Paul, "and gave Himself for us." They remembered His life, so wholly devoted to telling men of the good news that God loved them; they recalled the long days spent in teaching the common people; they went back in affectionate memory to the life so consecrated to the good of others, so devoid of self-amusement and self-

pleasing; they remembered how this life had ended in death, willingly given up for the cause of truth. Reflecting on the life, they bore testimony to their simple faith, "God had so loved the world, that He had sent His Son." It was not only that the Jesus whom they had known had been a man gracious and loving. He *was* love. Expand love to the infinite, it would be found in Him. Other men had loved their fellows and laid down their lives for truth. But He did not possess a portion of the spirit of grace and love. He *was* grace and love. "In Him was the love of God manifested." Or, once again, the impression left upon them was one of wisdom. They remembered how his sharp criticism of current casuistry seemed to pierce through the mists of bewilderment which centuries of discussion had caused to hang over their minds, and let them straight through to the deep religious truths which lie behind men's misconceptions. God wanted not rigid observance of traditional rules, but mercy and love. A man's neighbour was any one who was in trouble. Death was not the worst of evils. A man might prolong his life and lose his soul. He might go to a premature death and gain through it life eternal. And it was not only that He uttered wise sayings, full of deep insight into human nature. He himself *was*, as St. Paul says, the wisdom of God from whom wisdom flowed, because He not only, as other men, possessed a share of wisdom, but was wisdom personified. "We preach," said St. Paul, "Christ, the Wisdom of God." St. John put it in another way when he said that Christ was the

Word or Reason of God. "The Word was God, ... and the Word became flesh." Power, Wisdom, Love, Reason—other men possess these or some slight share in them. But in Christ, as the Apostles judged, these qualities were to the full. In other words, He was not only a great personality, a magnificent character, but He was all that goes to make up perfect character to the full, i.e. His personality was ideal personality; and what is that but saying that He was the divine in human form? "In Him," said St. Paul, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Discovery or Revelation? In which of these two categories are we to estimate this conception of the historical Christ? Judged simply as a representation of an historical figure, I should be obliged to feel that terms of discovery are inadequate to meet the case. What sort of men were they who could so idealize—who, from the facts of an earthly life passed through the atmosphere of speculation, could produce this picture of the ideal man victorious over the world, master of himself, sympathetic with human frailty, sinless yet suffering, conquering in death? How much fitter seems the alternative explanation of revelation? The Christ of the New Testament is an ultimate fact; the personal God revealing Himself through manhood to draw men to Himself; the eternal Father of men revealing Himself in the Son of His love, the ideal and perfect man.

Of course the difficulty for us moderns lies here. If this be so, how explain the narrow and limited application allowed to this revelation in

history? The world has grown bigger to us as the centuries have advanced, and European history, in which alone until quite recently this revelation has been operative, is after all a mere groove in the history of mankind. What of the many millions of men who during these centuries have lived and died, and now are living and dying outside as it seems the influence of the historical self-revelation of God to men? We can but answer that we do not know. But the assertion of a revelation of God in Christ does not of course preclude a revelation of Himself in other ways elsewhere. Of this, at least, we are sure, that at no time and in no place in the world's history has the God of mercy and of love, who has revealed Himself to us in Judaism and in Christianity, been severed from other men; that in some measure He has revealed Himself to all as they were able to bear it: and that none has ever longed for Him and called upon Him without receiving in some measure the answer to his cry.

EVOLUTION

F. A. Dixey, M.A., M.D.

No one can consider the phenomena of the world around him without being struck with the fact that order and harmony, not confusion and discord, are characteristic of the visible universe. The more closely we make our examination, the stronger does our conviction grow that Nature is truly a cosmos; that the facts of Nature are not isolated, unconnected occurrences, but incidents in a great series of events; bound together, inter-dependent, linked in a uniform sequence of cause and effect. There is, so far as we can see, nothing capricious, nothing arbitrary, about the course of Nature; apparent irregularities turn out to be manifestations of law imperfectly understood. It is this uniformity of Nature that renders what we call Science possible. If we cannot assume that the properties of a given substance to-day are the same that it had yesterday and will have to-morrow; that like causes can always be relied on to produce like effects; in short, that the reign of uniformity, or, as we call it, natural law, is universal, we can have no science of Nature, and must fall back on those crude surmises and magical practices which occupied, while they did not satisfy, our forefathers in distant ages.

The totality of Nature, then, is not a mere haphazard bundle of facts and incidents thrown together at random, but an organized and con-

nected whole, each part of which stands in definite and necessary relation to every other part; in other words, the scheme of Nature is what we should call, in dealing with human affairs, rational. So much, I think, would at the present day be admitted on all hands. It is when we seek an explanation of this fact, when we ask to what is the appearance of order and uniformity in Nature due, that we find diversity of opinion in place of agreement.

There are, to speak generally, two possible lines of interpretation of the order and harmony which we observe in Nature. In the first place the scheme of the universe may be looked upon as the result of the operations of a mind proceeding by methods analogous to those of human reason; that is to say, as the designed work of a personal Creator. Or, on the other hand (to use a terminology which is now becoming somewhat antiquated), we may conceive of matter, force, and the laws under which they interact, as being themselves self-existent—a view which when touched with theism becomes pantheism, and when abstracted from the notion of a deity is not to be distinguished from materialism.

Pantheism is, of course, incompatible with the theory of design; for design implies a personal designer, and pantheism is the negation of personality. At the same time it may be conceded that under the pantheistic conception the self-existent universe might bear the appearance of design without its reality. For granting the initial conditions, the self-existing law, matter, and energy, there can be no reason why the

forces of the universe should not work themselves out in a definite and orderly manner. There is nothing to interfere with them; there is no Will external to themselves to show caprice, or to introduce confusion—all is regular and all is inevitable. Within such a scheme of the universe the process of evolution finds its place without difficulty; it is merely the expression of self-existing, inexorable law. We ourselves are at once spectators of and actors in a drama whose end was implicit in its beginning. Things could not happen otherwise than as they do; what to us bears the semblance of a plan is simply the necessary outcome of the endless interaction of self-existing matter and force.

Whether or not the mystery of the universe can be adequately explained on these lines, there is no doubt that the conception of the supremacy of law which is embodied in such a system of thought is in accordance with the considerations as to the uniformity of Nature which occupied our attention at the outset. This is doubtless one of the reasons why pantheism and materialism exercise so powerful an attraction on the minds of many students of Nature. Nevertheless it cannot be said that scientific materialism is all plain sailing. The perplexities it involves are indeed of no light order. To say nothing of philosophical objections, or of the moral difficulties which, as the example of Hinduism shows us, tread closely on the heels of the negation of personality, it is doubtful how far our knowledge of scientific fact will warrant

the assumption of eternally subsistent force and matter. And if the universe of force and matter has not existed from eternity, we cannot escape the question of when it began and why.

But leaving aside for the time the pantheistic and materialistic solution of the riddle of creation, let us turn to the view which supposes the world of matter and force to be not self-existent, but the work of a personal Creator. Under such a view the question arises : What is the relation of God to the universe, of the Creator to the created ? To this question there are, speaking in general terms, two answers. There is first the deist solution, under which the Deity is regarded as not only distinct from, but, so to speak, outside of his creation ; as having, as it were, put together a huge piece of complicated machinery which, once wound up, will go on till it runs down of itself, or may possibly be so constructed as to go on for ever. There is no intervention, no miracle, no revelation for the consistent deist. The world was created once for all, and then left to take care of itself. In the second place, we have the Christian view, which, as I need hardly say, agrees with the deist opinion so far as to avoid deifying Nature or identifying the Creator with the universe, but parts company with it by holding that the Deity, though distinct from His work, is not shut out of it, but immanent within it, "upholding all things," as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it, "by the Word of His Power."

What bearing has the acceptance of either of these latter views on the question of design ?

The hypothesis of a personal Creator, whether under the deist or the Christian form, not only admits of the possibility of design in creation, but may be said in some measure to demand it. Still, for the deist it has always been a question how far the influence of design could be allowed. He is naturally anxious to preserve the integrity of his conception of a universe with which God does not, as he would put it, "interfere." Hence, when confronted with the problem of final causes, that is to say, the existence of adaptations which seem to have been specially planned to meet certain requirements in Nature, he appears to have two alternatives before him. He might (1) Deny the existence of final causes; or (2) Relegate them to the original act of creation. Against the first alternative, that is to say the denial of final causes, arguments like Paley's (which recall some of those in Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*) were directed. Paley and other disputants had little difficulty in showing the existence of adaptations and correlations, which to their eyes conveyed unmistakable evidence of design. But Paley, though himself no deist, failed, like many theologians of the time, to escape the unconscious infection of deistic ideas current in the thought of the age. Hence to him and his school the only alternative to the denial of final causes (which denial seemed to them to run counter to the plain testimony of their reason and of their senses) appeared to be the conception of final causes as having existed from the beginning; which view became so much a part

of current theological belief, that it no doubt goes far to explain the distaste with which the suggestion of evolution in any form was received in theological quarters. Evolution interfered with what seemed to these apologists to be the only reasonable view of creation, and was accordingly discredited. It would be interesting to inquire how much of the opposition that is still manifested to the theory of evolution on the part of religiously-minded people is due to unconscious deism.

Without going too far into this matter, we may here try to formulate the kind of difficulty that is apt to arise in the minds of those who would fain believe in a personal Creator, but who cannot shut their eyes and ears to the teachings of science. Their position may perhaps be stated in some such way as this: We have been used to think that we could rely on the visible universe around us, with its various adaptations and adjustments, its constant suiting of means to ends apparent wherever we look, to give the presumption of an overruling beneficent Mind —capable of foresight, of contrivance, and of moulding to its own purposes all the diverse forces of Nature. But with the acceptance of the theory of evolution, we are told, all this is changed. The phenomena of Nature are merely the inevitable product of natural law. Adaptations have, so to speak, made themselves; the various apparently purposeful contrivances of which we are witnesses could not have been otherwise than as they are, their adequacy for the end in view being the indispensable con-

dition of their very existence. The operations of Nature are mechanical; given the original constitution of matter and force, their interaction could only have resulted in the fabric of the universe as it appeals to our senses to-day. There is no room for guidance, no opportunity for design. The universe—adaptations and all—could not choose but be as it is. Adjustments exist because the unadjusted perishes. So far from having existed from the beginning they are coming into being every day. What, then, becomes of the idea of an original creation?

There is no doubt that an objection, or rather a series of objections, like this touches a weak point in the armour of many theologians. It is evident that the world, as we know it, was not turned out, so to speak, as a "going concern". It is the result, as yet unfinished, of the incessant play of forces; of a long series of actions, reactions, adaptations, correlations, extinctions, and survivals. We are in the midst, not of a *tableau vivant*, but of a great moving drama, the plot of which, though still incompletely known, is being gradually unfolded from age to age. Paley could adumbrate the visible universe under the figure of a watch; to us the right comparison of the world around us is not to a completed engine, but to a developing organism. The old motto of students of Nature was "mechanics"; the new motto is "growth".

All this is perfectly true, and helps us to see that the old deistic conception breaks down under the weight of the theory of evolution. The God of the deist is like the gods of Epicurus

—He set the world going, and did not care what became of it. But evolution shows that if there is a God at all He does care what becomes of it. Everything tends to the carrying out of a purpose—the "one far-off divine event towards which the whole creation moves". We are brought, then, to this point—that if the universe is the work of a personal Creator, He is not indifferent but interested; not excluded from the domain of Nature, but though transcendent still immanent within it; not conditioned by the laws of Nature, but working in and by those laws the continuous expression of His will. He is not, in short, the God of the deist, but the God of the Christian. Design in the old sense of the word, in accordance with which the Creator was conceived of as an artificer, or carpenter (τεχνίτης, as Athanasius puts it), is assuredly disposed of by the theory of evolution; and it is the realization of this, operating on what I have spoken of as the unconscious deism of popular theology, that produces the sense of disquietude and uneasiness felt by many at the spread of the new doctrine.

From these considerations it will, I think, appear that the difficulty I have mentioned is in part a real one. The objection, that is to say, holds against a view of creation which has been widely entertained, and which is still regarded by many as what may be called the official view of religion. It is on such grounds as these that many thoughtful persons, feeling themselves constrained to abandon their confidence in the interpretation of adaptations and adjustments as

proofs of design, have gone on to relinquish their belief in a personal Creator, and have thus resorted to the alternative theory of self-existing matter, force and law; becoming pantheists or materialists according to their several temperaments and inclinations; or, again, have refused to adopt any theory at all, thus becoming agnostics.

But are these the only possible alternatives? A little consideration will show that they are not. Let us look at the objection somewhat more closely.

In the first place we may note that some are apt to be misled by a misuse of the term "mechanical". We have seen already that to call the aspect of Nature presented to us by evolution "mechanical" is an abuse of language. In truth the term would be far more accurately applied to the view which evolution has displaced—that view, namely, which treats the universe as the work of a great "Artificer" or "Architect", turned out as a finished product, and left under the operation of laws which have been laid down once for all, and by which their Maker is Himself conditioned unless He chooses to "break" them. Let it be noted that the distinction is not a mere matter of words. There is a radical difference between a piece of mechanism, however complex, and a living, growing, reproducing organism. It may be that the processes of life will some day be found capable of expression in terms of chemistry and physics; but even if this be so it will remain true that the living and the not-living belong, for all practical purposes, to separate categories. The facts of growth, of assimilation

as distinct from accretion, of the unfolding of intrinsic qualities in orderly succession, and the consequent emergence of a given organism into new conditions of physical and psychical activity, are familiar to all of us in the history of our own individual development from infancy to adult life. They are repeated, with modifications, in the history of a race, of a species, of a social community. Whatever may be the physical bonds between the organic and inorganic phases of matter, and whatever may be the ultimate significance of vitality, there is no doubt that with life we do enter upon a new mode of existence, a new set of relations with surrounding conditions, complete as may be the dependence of those relations on a physical basis. The distinction between growth and mechanism is in these cases felt to be a real one; moreover, it is a distinction of wider application than to the instances that have been given. It does not coincide with that between the organic and the inorganic aspects of Nature. In so far as the material structure of the universe—the present distribution of matter through space, the movements of the heavenly bodies, their union into systems, the array of elements, and their combination under the play of cosmic forces, can be shown to be as it were a scene in a drama—a phase growing out of what has gone before, and leading on to what will follow after—to that extent the conception of mechanism is found to be inadequate as an expression of the complex of natural phenomena. The individual machine has no developmental history. It is not unfolded, but put

together. It can be resolved into its separate parts and reconstituted so as to go on as before. It includes nothing but what has been put into it by its constructor, and has no inherent power of adapting itself to new and diverse conditions as they arise.

It is true that in regarding the history, not of the individual machine, but of the kind or class to which it belongs—its advance by the labour of successive inventors to gradually increasing complexity and adaptation to its conditions of work—we may discern something closely analogous to growth. Here we are really brought face to face with a process which may legitimately be included under the head of evolution. But in truth this only serves to emphasize the distinction that has been drawn above. The work of the individual machine is mechanical, though the process of its development by successive improvements is not. There is little need to point out to which side the analogy of Nature leans; or to repeat that the course of cosmic evolution is in no exact sense "mechanical", though the visible universe may, and does, include mechanisms.

Supposing it, then, to be allowed that in evolution we have the key to the operations of Nature and to the history of the material universe, it is clear that the older versions of the work of creation need to be restated. But the form which our restatement is to take requires some care.

It is not uncommon to hear the case put in some such way as this: "We must give up the old idea of the manufacture of the world as a 'going concern'. But this need not mean giving

up the idea of a single, definite, original act of creation. Matter and force were called into being once for all, and then left to work out their combinations as they could; this process of working out being in effect what we know as evolution." Then, it may further be urged, is there much real difference between the present and the former view? In this case, as in the other, the processes of Nature go on of themselves; nor is there more room under these than under the other conditions for guidance or intervention.

Put in this way, no doubt there is much plausibility in such reasoning. It is clear that, given the hypothesis of a personal Creator, the conception of the original creation of matter in a simple form comes much nearer the truth than the older view of the universe turned out as a finished product. But it is perhaps not always recognized what this does and what it does not involve. It does not and cannot mean that the notion of design is got rid of or in any way weakened; on the contrary, the question whether at the moment of creation the world in all its detail was made *actually* as men once believed, or *potentially* as we now think, is, so far as the likelihood of design is concerned, of no real importance. If, when the creation of the world of Nature as we know it was believed to have taken place in a moment of time, the present condition of that world was thought to bear evident tokens of design, exactly the same kind of evidence is given by the calling into being of matter and force so constituted and subject to such conditions that the material universe of to-day arose from it as

a matter of necessity. In fact, the element of *time* hardly enters into the question, except from a purely human standpoint. The conception of time does not readily link itself with such ideas as we are able to form of the nature of Deity; and in the same relation the distinction between actual and potential is deprived of its importance.

It is clear, then, that in order to dispose of the teleological argument, as it is called, it is not enough to upset the doctrine of "special creation" and set up evolution in its place. This does not really touch the point at all. Evolution, it is true, destroys the old teleology of Paley's day; but in its turn it sets up a new teleology, which is by no means so easily got rid of. How does it come to pass that the adaptations and contrivances of Nature are in actual existence? They exist because the fittest has survived. How has there come to be a fit and an unfit? Because of the constitution of matter and of the laws which regulate its behaviour. Every material thing now existing, and, so far as we know, at any future time to exist, was potentially present from the beginning. The whole plan, in fact, of the universe was implicit in the first process of the material creation. The method of creation is no doubt widely different from what used to be thought; but design, if necessary at all, is called for exactly as much in the one case as in the other, neither more nor less.

There is, then, no difficulty in the problem of final causes, except for the deist, who is bound, if he is consistent, to find a place for them to which they do not really belong. Under the

theory of evolution, adaptations and contrivances for a definite end are a simple and natural series of incidents in the orderly history of creation.

But, it may still be objected, in thus asserting that the whole plan of the universe was implicit in its origin, are you not bringing back the old deism, or something very much like it? This, I think, can hardly be maintained. Deism personalizes God and distinguishes Him from His works, and so far it embodies a true conception. If the universe, as we know it, could be conceived of as having been turned out as a "going concern", with all its contrivances and adaptations ready-made, then it might be possible to admit the deistic view of the complete detachment of God from Nature, the physical fabric being left, so to speak, to take its chance. But this is just what the history of the universe as interpreted by evolution will not allow us to imagine. We may indeed speak of God as "declaring the end from the beginning"; but the orderly development of that end from age to age forbids the supposition of the withdrawal of God from the world of matter. The deist, it is true, cannot but admit the existence of law, at any rate as an observed uniformity; but in so far as the processes of Nature are shown to be intelligible and therefore rational, to that extent his conception of the relation subsisting between God and Nature becomes weakened; and while it appears more and more clearly—as it does under the teaching of science—that everything in the domain of Nature takes place in accordance with law, that "chance" is merely an expression to hide our present ignor-

ance of the operation of law, so the conception of a universe independent of its Creator must tend to disappear, and to be replaced by the belief in the laws of Nature as the expression of a constantly operating Will which manifests itself in every corner of the universe, and pervades every form of physical activity, in accordance with a plan, a design, and a purpose, working towards a definite and moral result which as yet is concealed from our view. In other words, the laws of Nature are to us the expression of a Power which is not only personal and transcendent, but also immanent and energizing—the God in fact of the Christian, and not the God of the deist.

But so far as our immediate point is concerned, it is quite immaterial whether we conceive the fabric of the universe as we know it, balanced and mutually related as it is in all its parts, to have come into actual being simultaneously or gradually, as the expression of a creative act which altogether transcends reason, or in accordance with the operation of natural laws of which our own reasoning faculties are able in some degree to take cognizance. In either case the evidence of design, for those who accept the dogma of a personal Creator, is overwhelming.

We see, then, that in view of our present knowledge of the universe and its history, we can hardly be satisfied with a bare assertion of what is called "primary creation". Our restatement, if it is to correspond in any measure with the enlarged views of Nature now put before us by science, whether biological or physico-chemical, must take into account the processes

of "secondary creation", that is to say, the gradual unfolding of the present order under the operation of law.

The old conception, however, of a Deity outside of His own laws, and, so to speak, conditioned by them, dies hard. Evolution, as we have seen, discredits the notion that God does not care for the universe; but we have also had to recognize the fact that the temper of mind which led to the original deistic position still exists. It is found quite commonly even among those who profess a hearty acceptance of evolutionary doctrine. Such disputants, it is true, cannot resist the consciousness that their position is a precarious one; but they endeavour in most cases to preserve the appearance of consistency by making a kind of compromise, somewhat as follows:—"We grant you," they will say, "that Evolution is part of the ordinary course of Nature. We accept all that science has to teach us of the gradual advance from the simple to the complex, of the slow development under law of more and more highly specialized forms of life, with adaptations more and more nicely adjusted to an ever-widening environment. But," they go on to say, "there are certain events or stages in the process of organic development which cannot be explained in the terminology of natural law. Here and there—say, at the level when life was first called into existence as an attribute of certain combinations of matter, at the emergence of self-consciousness, or when the artistic or intellectual faculties of man first came into play, there must have been

a special act of creative power—an intervention, so to speak, in the natural order of the universe, and the introduction *de novo* of a fresh factor among the previously existing conditions of the physical fabric."

Now it is unquestionably possible to use almost the same words as these with a significance which would not be far from the truth. But in the sense in which such statements are usually intended by their utterers and understood by their hearers, it can only be said that they convey a dangerous doctrine. It was a fundamental mistake both of the old deism and of the apologetic school of Paley to limit the operation of secondary causes. From this mistake in its cruder forms the science of the present day has freed us ; but nothing is to be gained, at any rate from the religious point of view, by striving to hold isolated points of defence when the main position has been hopelessly turned. It may be quite true that science is not yet able to solve satisfactorily any one of the problems that have been indicated ; but when we consider how much has been done to explain the previously inexplicable, and how, one after another, what were to all appearance the most independent and disconnected phenomena have been brought under the domain of well-established law, we cannot resist the anticipation that more and more of what now seems no part of the regular order of Nature will be brought within its influence ; and that, as a consequence, the ground will be gradually cut away from under the feet

of those who would still take their stand upon tracts in the natural process of development which have hitherto defied scientific discovery and analysis. Religiously, this will be nothing but a gain; for it will drive one more—perhaps the last—nail into the coffin of the old idea of the Creator conditioned by laws from which He can only emancipate Himself by a forcible act of intervention.

The suggested compromise must be rejected, not only in the interests of science, but quite as much in the interests of theology. Under the accumulation and codification of our knowledge of natural phenomena and law, the believers in a universe apart from God—that is, from which God is practically excluded—have been driven out of one position after another. Their denial of final causes was successfully met by apologists of the school of Paley; but it has been reserved for more recent times to show the true significance in creation of what to Paley bore the appearance of "artifice" or "contrivance"; and to demonstrate for all those who accept the hypothesis of a personal Creator, the fact that to Him the destiny of the universe is no matter of indifference, and that His forming and directing energy is as operative to-day as in the first fiat of creation. The only refuge now remaining to the impugners of the Divine immanence in Nature is an appeal to human ignorance; and we may confidently leave to time and the further progress of knowledge the final decision of the issue.

So far we have spoken of evolution in general

terms as a well-established and abundantly verified interpretation of the past and present history of the universe. Our justification for this treatment is to be found in the fact that no scientific authority now disputes the validity of this reading of Nature, however much discussion of a domestic nature may be taking place with regard to evolutionary method. And although it has not been argued in this lecture that the acceptance of evolution necessarily carries with it the acceptance of Christianity, as if religion, indeed, were a branch of natural history, yet the attempt has been made to show that, for the Christian, evolution is a help and not a hindrance; that a conviction of the truth of the theory of development, so far from being incompatible with assent to the Catholic Faith, in truth harmonizes with that Faith as it never can be brought to harmonize with any non-Christian conception of the Divine nature and attributes.

If there be any force in the contentions that have here been advanced, they will remain unaffected by any question as to the actual method of evolution. It is well known that the general agreement among scientific men as to the fact of evolution has never carried with it, nor does it imply to-day, any corresponding agreement as to the details of the evolutionary process. Though for the purposes of our present discussion the differences that divide the leaders of opinion on these points are of minor importance, they are yet of great interest in themselves, and not altogether without bearing on our conception of the relation between God and Nature. More-

over, the tendency that has just been remarked upon—the endeavour, I mean, to raise an apologetic structure upon the basis of a false antithesis—the tendency that we find in Paley's attempted distinction between natural process and direct "contrivance", as he called it; or in the invoking of a special act of Divine intervention to bridge over apparent gaps in the natural order of development;—this tendency again finds expression, as we shall see, in certain estimates that have been formed of the comparative value for apologetic purposes of these divergent views of evolutionary method. The tendency referred to is probably as perilous in this latter department as in the former, and as likely to find itself in conflict with advancing knowledge; but inasmuch as it not only exists, but often finds expression in ways that give occasion to the adversary, it may be well to examine briefly into its working in the light of a concrete instance. The bearing of what has been said will, I trust, in this way become plainer as we proceed.

It is a matter of common knowledge that there exists among students of evolution in the realm of biology a fundamental difference of opinion as to the hereditary transmissibility of acquired characters. There is no necessity to enlarge in this place on the history of the controversy, or to show in any detail how opinion on this point stands related with other vexed questions in evolutionary method. It will be enough to recall the fact that those biologists who are most impressed with the importance of

Darwin's principle of natural selection are for the greater part disposed to deny the existence of such transmission, which they hold on scientific grounds to be antecedently improbable, and, as a matter of fact, unsupported by evidence. Those who believe that such transmission is not only possible, but actually takes place, are generally inclined to make less and less account of natural selection, and indeed in some cases to dispense with that principle altogether. Despite the fact that Darwin in his own day managed to hold both views at the same time—the view, namely, of the supreme importance of natural selection, and along with it the view of the subsidiary effect of the hereditary transmission of functional modifications or acquired characters—the name of Darwinian, or neo-Darwinian, is now by common consent restricted to those observers who find in natural selection as propounded by Darwin a sufficient explanation of the present aspect of life on the globe. The believers in the hereditary transmissibility of acquired characters are usually spoken of as neo-Lamarckians, Lamarck having been the first biological investigator to base a connected theory of evolution upon the supposed inheritance of the effects of use and disuse in the individual. By Lamarckians, whether of the old or new school, natural selection is regarded as a cause of subordinate importance, or is even discarded altogether. We have, therefore, in practice, a sufficiently sharp line of demarcation between the two schools, of whom we may take as representatives

Wallace and Weismann on the Darwinian side, Herbert Spencer and Haeckel on the Lamarckian. Now it is quite unnecessary for me to enter upon the merits of this internal warfare that divides the ranks of the evolutionists, or to bring forward even in the briefest manner any of the evidence that may be adduced on either side of the question. The task, though in itself by no means uninteresting, would be unsuited to the present occasion. If my own opinion on the matter is of interest to anybody, I may venture to say that after much study of the question I agree with Father Waggett, in holding that "with all the weakness which may be pointed out in some of its applications, natural selection remains scientifically the most probable and philosophically the most welcome account of the adaptations of animal and vegetable life". But the point which I wish now to emphasize is this: that whichever of these conflicting systems comes nearer to the truth, there is no warrant for considering either of them as in any degree inimical to the belief in a personal Creator. Scientifically, there is a real antithesis between the two; no sooner, however, is one of them treated as consonant with theistic belief to the exclusion of the other, than a false antithesis is set up which may eventually lead to disastrous results. Some may think that I exaggerate the danger; I can only say in reply that I speak from actual experience. I have known it to be urged quite seriously by a responsible writer that whereas the Darwinian theory of natural selection gives a merely mechanical view of

organic nature, in which the conception of an immanent deity can find no place, the neo-Lamarckian doctrine of evolution is not only compatible with, but actually seems to call for, the existence of an all-wise and all-powerful Creator. This is what I mean by building on a false antithesis. If it be necessary to summon the aid of Divine power under the neo-Lamarckian view, it is equally necessary under the neo-Darwinian; while any one who is really satisfied with the pantheistic or materialistic interpretation of Nature would find himself quite as much at home with the one hypothesis as with the other.

But it will here be desirable to look a little more closely into the question, and to try to get at the reason for the opinion that other theories of evolution imply the existence of a divine creative agency, whereas Darwin's theory excludes it. In the case of many minds, the situation has, I think, come about in this way. The belief in the inheritance of acquired characters, though it may theoretically be held (as in Darwin's case) along with a conviction of the validity of natural selection, yet tends to diminish the importance of the latter principle. A distrust in the adequacy of natural selection to bring about the results claimed in its behalf, when thus engendered, is apt to grow; and as the disposition increases to find if possible other explanations of the phenomena of organic development, recourse is had to such hypotheses as "directed or determinate variability", an "inherent tendency towards perfection" and the like, in combination with, and

as a reinforcement of the Lamarckian tenet of use-inheritance and Buffon's suggestion of a transmission to offspring of the direct effect of the environment upon the individual. The conception of "directivity in variation", or of "an inherent tendency towards perfection"—which corresponds pretty closely with Eimer's "orthogenesis"—is no new one. As many of my hearers are probably aware, it is at least as old as Aristotle. It reappears in a certain sense in the writings of the schoolmen, by whom Aristotle was welcomed as an upholder of the rationality of Nature; though he did not, like his followers in mediaeval times, use this position as a basis for theism. Evolutionists of the neo-Lamarckian type are, whether consciously or not, up to a certain point Aristotelian in their sympathies; and just as Aristotle was made in the Middle Ages to do duty as the "Christian philosopher", so the present or neo-Lamarckian form of the Aristotelian "tendency towards perfection" is seized upon by some well-meaning disputants as a weapon to be employed in the service of Christian apologetics. These tactics appear to me to be unsound, for the reason that the view of evolution which they presuppose is only the view of a party; and in the opinion of many biologists, these perhaps being the most competent, is never likely to meet with general acceptance. For a similar reason I should deprecate the attempt to raise an apologetic structure on the exclusive basis of natural selection, even if the latter were thought strong enough to bear it; for though I have little doubt in my own mind that the

selectionist school is destined to prevail over the believers in so-called "directivity", the battle is not yet won, and it is running a gratuitous risk to rest one's case on an issue at present undecided. The controversy as to the precise method of evolution is purely a scientific one, and its solution must be left to scientific experts. The important point for us here to recognize and act upon is that theism does not stand or fall with either one view or the other. While saying this, however, we may reserve to ourselves the right to our own opinion as to which view appears to be the more in consonance with what we are permitted to know of the Divine method of Creation.

What has now been stated as to the rivalry of contending hypotheses will, I hope, have made clear what was meant by the reference to the danger of stereotyping a false antithesis, and attempting to base a theological argument upon an insecure scientific foundation. Ultimately, no doubt, a mistake of this kind will get itself corrected. A similar error was committed by theologians when they adopted from the science of their time a belief in the dogma of the fixity of species. This dogma was not in its origin theological at all, but was practically the outcome of a stream of scientific thought which, as we now know, took a mistaken direction. Nevertheless, the theologians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, forsaking the sounder opinion of earlier times, as witnessed to by St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, adopted from the naturalists of their own day, and laid undue stress on, a view

of organic nature which has turned out to be untenable. This mistake has, indeed, got itself rectified, and all parties are now rapidly recovering from the results of their initial error; but meantime much harm has been done. Scientific men do not always remember that they themselves, or rather their scientific predecessors, were answerable for this particular misreading of Nature; had they done so, it is possible that certain criticisms directed against the alleged obscurantism of the clergy might have taken a more moderate tone; but the whole history of the dogma of the fixity of species constitutes a wholesome warning against making too much of a scientific opinion the truth of which stops short of actual demonstration.

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to point out that a caution of this kind does not apply to the case of the general doctrine of evolution. The uncertainty which must be admitted still to prevail as to the details of the process does not affect the central truth, which must be taken to be as well established in its main features as any of the generalizations of science. Unless we are prepared to give up the results of the investigation of Nature since the earliest times as mere delusions, we must accept evolution. And in this acceptance we find at once a key to that *rationality* of Nature which, in spite of temporary obscurations, has impressed itself as a truth upon the minds of the keenest observers of physical phenomena from Aristotle downwards.

"It will never be possible," as Aubrey Moore says, "absolutely to deny that the world is due

to a concourse of atoms, or to prove the counter rational theory as necessarily true. But the fact which remains with us is that, the greater and more numerous the apparent fitnesses and adaptations in nature are, the more improbable any but a rational theory becomes for the untrained mind, and still more for trained and disciplined thinkers." Few, I believe, will be disposed to deny the justice of this conclusion.

Granting, then, the rationality of the world, as proclaimed and guaranteed by evolution, we come back to the old question: "To what is this rationality due?" For the Christian there is an obvious answer, consistent with, nay, suggested by, the visible order of Nature. For the non-Christian, it is not too much to say there is no solution which can be accepted as thoroughly satisfactory to the reason.

I have said little on the subject of the explanation which some have professed to find in the domain of pantheistic and materialistic speculation. This is mainly because it appears to me that the difficulties in the way of such an explanation belong mostly to other provinces than the scientific. They are philosophical and moral, rather than physical. It is true that attempts have been made, as by Lord Kelvin in an interesting correspondence which appeared about two years ago in the columns of the *Times*, to draw a fundamental distinction between what might be concluded as to the mode of formation of a crystal, and that of an animal or plant. The former, he seemed to say, though he did not use the actual terms, might conceivably be patient of

a pantheistic or materialistic interpretation; not so the latter. But in order to make good his point, he had, in the case of animal or plant, to call in the assistance of a hypothetical "vital principle", which I am bound to say, in the sense in which he appeared to use the phrase, is an entity unrecognized by any modern biologist of standing. It was well pointed out on that occasion by several writers, among them by Sir William Thiselton-Dyer and Professor Ray Lankester, that there is no scientific justification for stopping short at the crystal. With the supervention of life, matter rises assuredly into a different category; but, to use Sir William Thiselton-Dyer's illustration, if blind impersonal forces are equal to the production of a diamond, it is difficult on scientific grounds to see why they should not be credited with the eventual production of a caterpillar.

It seems then that on such lines as those just indicated, the pantheistic interpretation of nature is hardly open to effective attack. The arguments, however, of the distinguished biologists whom I have mentioned, though valid, as I believe, against Lord Kelvin's dualism, are not directed against, nor do they in the slightest degree affect the credibility of the view which would attribute the genesis of both diamond and caterpillar—the totality in fact of the objects of Nature, whether living or inanimate—to the conscious agency of a personal Creator.

To conclude: The rationality of the scheme of the universe, a truth long ago surmised by Greek philosophers, accepted "almost as a common-

place" by the Mediaeval schoolmen, and temporarily questioned by thinkers of the eighteenth century, has been fully rehabilitated in our own day by the establishment of evolution. Final causes, for a time discredited or ignored, have once more come to the front. They not only exist, they are all-important; for, whatever there may remain still to be learnt concerning the method of evolution, there is no doubt that it consists essentially in a series of adaptations to environment, determined in the long run by utility. Under the same fruitful principle it has become increasingly difficult to conceive of Nature as a mere blind machine, doing its round of work without progress, hope or purpose. On the other hand, the way is left open for the recognition of Deity as a moral and personal Power, who is both transcendent and immanent, the continuous exercise of whose will becomes evident to us in those laws of Nature which our faculties are enabling us more and more clearly to comprehend and to analyse. The further and the deeper our analysis extends, the clearer becomes our conception of the continuity of the Divine agency throughout the whole visible universe, both in the relations of time and of space. The ideas of interference, "tinkering," carpenter-work, even artist's work, in reference to creation are all out of date. God's revelation of Himself in history, in religion and in morals, we have long known to be progressive; we now recognize the same attribute in His revelation of Himself in the sphere of Nature. It is doubtless the case that when all these forms of revelation have borne their witness, the chain of

Christian evidence is still incomplete without an appeal in the domain of conscience. But the way to a reasoned acceptance of the Christian verities has been made easier and safer in our own time than perhaps ever before, by the illuminating principle of Evolution.

SIN AND MODERN THOUGHT

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Modern thought does not make much of sin; it tends to suppress it. Professor William James, who is one of the most popular philosophical writers of our generation, says with complacency: "In civilized life it has at last become possible for large numbers of people to pass from the cradle to the grave without ever having had a pang of genuine fear." Sir Oliver Lodge in the *Hibbert Journal* strikes much the same note: "As a matter of fact, the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment. His mission, if he is good for anything, is to be up and doing. . . . As for original sin or other notion of that kind, that sits absolutely lightly upon him. As a matter of fact it is non-existent, and no one but a monk could have invented it." Our theologians are more cautious than this; but the same tendency to ignore sin, and fear, which is the shadow of sin, is very apparent in our sermons and other religious literature. In the Church of England, threats from the pulpit have almost disappeared; among the Nonconformists they are becoming uncommon. It will hardly be suggested that this is because we have attained the perfect love that casteth out fear. No; we have ceased to fear punishment because

we do not think we deserve it. What has decayed among us, strangely and rapidly, is the sense of sin.

I wish to consider the causes of this very remarkable change, which has come about mainly in the last fifty years.

First, common sense and morality have both revolted against the intense moral dualism which divides mankind into the "lost" and the "saved", and assigns the two classes a difference of treatment far surpassing the wildest freaks of inequality in which fortune indulges on earth. In the old days people were allowed to whisper that So-and-so was "over-bad for blessing, and over-good for banning"; but now we feel this about almost everybody. We can find no great gulf fixed—no dividing line between the good and the bad—no line which is not crossed and recrossed by each of us many times. The picture which used to be shown to us seems to be painted in too harsh and crude colours. Human nature is seldom or never utterly depraved; it is seldom or never entirely saintly or heroic. We hardly ever meet a person whom we could call, without qualification, bad. We never come across any one who could be condemned, by any judge whom *we* should consider just or merciful, to never-ending torments.

I do not think it is fair to say that in earlier centuries the infinite difference between good and bad was recognized, whereas now it has been lost. It would be more true to say that disproportionate punishments were then so familiar that they shocked no one, whereas now they

seem to us unworthy of God, and indeed incredible in an universe governed by God. The only God whom we can worship and believe in is one who rewards every man according to his work, causing us all to reap just what we have sown, and helping us to sow to the Spirit instead of to the flesh. In this our life's task we all succeed and fail in various degrees. We have many things to reproach ourselves with; we do not rebel against sharp discipline, if God thinks fit to send it to us; we contemplate the dread possibility of final rejection, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling; but we cannot honestly apply to ourselves, and still less to others, the language of contempt and loathing which we find in the old penitential books, nor can we honestly think that frail humanity, which "cannot always stand upright", can deserve at the hand of its Creator and Redeemer such hideous penalties as Christian antiquity and the Middle Ages loved to imagine and describe.

Akin to the dread of tremendous penalties is the notion of sin as essentially *rebellion* against God. Here is another doctrine against which modern thought protests. Such a rebellion is only the last stage of sin: the beginning of it is something far less tragic, far less guilty. We can trace the beginning of sin by observing it in a rudimentary form in a child. The child is at first not immoral, but non-moral. It is purely self-centred, and would probably perish if its "selfish" instincts were less strong. These instincts are not vices; they are the neutral

ground out of which both virtues and vices may grow. We cannot speak of "sin" at all in a child, until the moral consciousness has appeared, which is said to take place in the third or fourth year of life. Scientific study of child-life, a method unthought of before the nineteenth century, has shown how complex are the factors by which the sense of right and wrong is developed, and how large a part of the struggle between conscience and inclination may be explained as a conflict between inherited instinct and the necessity of adaptation to new requirements. To call this conflict, which in the nature of things must occur as a condition of real progress, "rebellion against God", is to do an injustice to human nature. Such language would be cruel and mischievous, if it were not so palpably unreal.

There has also been a shifting of moral values, which has tended to thrust the idea of sin somewhat into the background. The Jewish idea of "holiness" to which "sin" was opposed, was partly non-ethical, being closely connected with ceremonial purity, and chiefly negative. Wellhausen is broadly right when he says: "What holiness required was not to do good, but to avoid sin." The characteristic form of legislation in the Old Covenant was "thou shalt not", rather than "thou shalt". Catholic piety, especially when expounded by monks, has always been dominated by the same idea, that our chief duty is to avoid sin. The aspirant to saintliness, when under Catholic guidance, has generally begun by closing, so far as possible, all the

avenues through which temptation might come to him. Innocence rather than virtue has been his object. Against this teaching there has been a vigorous moral reaction. Goethe tells us that though a talent is formed in stillness, a character is only moulded in the stream of the world. To run away from life now seems an act of cowardice and treason. It is our duty to ask ourselves, "What am I good for?" more often than "What am I bad for?" We exhort the young man, just beginning his career, not to fly from all occasions of sin, but to find out

"quem te Deus esse
iussit, et humana qua parte locatus es in re."

There has also been a moral revolt against the doctrine of original *guilt*, as set forth in various Reformation formularies. The "imputation" of another's sin, the fictitious identification of members of the race with their first ancestor, are doctrines which contradict our sense of justice, and involve an obsolete philosophy. They are as dead as any religious doctrines, which have not been formally repudiated, can be. It is impossible to protect them, as Mozley does, by the old expedient already referred to, of calling them "a mystery". The truth, which we are all striving to find, may be, and no doubt is, mysterious; but there is nothing mysterious in the doctrine of imputation. It is a perfectly clear doctrine; and the moral sense of our time rejects it as unworthy of God and as based on no evidence.

These changes are all parts of a changing conception of the character of God, or of the

universal laws under which we live. To a Christian, the great question must be whether we are moving nearer to or farther from the mind of Christ as revealed in the Gospels.

To the Gospels, then, we turn for a few minutes. If our attention has been occupied by the theology of some Christian saints, which is dominated by a kind of obsession of guilt, sorrow, and dread, we shall feel that we have come suddenly into a brighter atmosphere when we open the New Testament. Our Lord seldom mentions sin, except in connexion with forgiveness. He came not to convict men of sin, but to forgive it and save them from it. The forgiveness of sins is a large part of His message of good tidings. Moreover, His indignation and reprobation are aroused by one class of sins, and by one only. For hypocrisy, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and "scandalizing" the weak, are all manifestations of one radical vice, and as such are attributed to the same persons. Any severance between religion and morality, or between religion and human sympathy, was in the eyes of Jesus Christ a treason against His heavenly Father. To notorious evil livers He showed Himself tender and merciful beyond the measure of any other teacher, to the religious misleaders of His people He was the sternest of judges. Our Lord limited the area of sin on the one side while He extended it on the other. The great principle, that only what goeth out of a man can defile him, swept away the whole mass of ceremonial pseudo-sins, which had become such a burden on the Jewish conscience.

How great was the relief afforded by this deliverance from "the Law" we can see in the case of St. Paul. A Pharisee might well have said of St. Paul what some are saying of the modern type of good man, that he held lax views about sin. And yet our Lord's teaching extended the area of sin farther than it had ever been extended before. He made it cover the whole of life. The easy yoke and light burden included an obligation to bring every thought into captivity to His obedience. The Ten Commandments, spiritualized, were co-extensive with the whole domain of conscious life. The distinction between religious and secular was abolished, but only by lifting the secular into the religious sphere. And His teaching, like the best teaching of our own day, and unlike the prevailing tone of Christian teaching in earlier times, was positive, not negative, and social, not individualistic. It was a joyous teaching, which gave no encouragement to introspection and brooding scrupulosity; a creed in which the "Touch not, taste not, handle not" of the old dispensation gave way to warnings against hiding our talent in a napkin, and to the freedom of St. Augustine's *ama et fac quod vis.*

Are we then to rejoice over the happier and less anxious spirit of Christianity in our own day, as if it were a return to our Blessed Lord's own Gospel? I wish we could do so. But along with much which is both necessary and salutary in the movement which I have been considering, there are other features which seem to justify

the unfavourable view of the spirit of the age which is taken by men like Bishop Gore. For example, much of the sentiment against eternal punishment is thoroughly flabby and frivolous. If death does not change us, but only strips us bare, and transplants us into a region where we can only be what we have become, the possibility of "eternal sin" and misery is as real as that of eternal righteousness and happiness. There has been at least one man of whom we know that it would have been better for him if he had never been born. Again, the necessity of being "born again", and of "dying to sin" as the first stage of the new birth, is too often forgotten. Modern psychologists may talk about "sky-blue souls" who are only once born, and need no violent treatment of the old Adam within them; but Christianity knows nothing of such a condition, and lays down an absolute rule that none can wear the crown who has not borne the cross.

But there are also more special influences which have contributed to modify the traditional beliefs of Christians on this subject. The progress of knowledge, philosophical, historical, and scientific, has had its effect on the current notions about sin. We have now to consider how far these new discoveries have really made some modification of the traditional doctrine necessary.

Let us take first the metaphysical problem of evil. It is frequently said that modern philosophy has thrown no new light on this insoluble problem, which remains as baffling and mysterious as when Augustine formulated his well-known dilemma: "Either God is unwilling

to abolish evil or He is unable. If He is unwilling, He is not good; if He is unable, He is not omnipotent." In truth the dilemma does seem to be unanswerable. But I think it is possible to adduce some considerations which may help us to see more clearly where the difficulty lies, and perhaps even in what direction we ought to look for some shadow of the invisible solution. The problem of evil is essentially a *religious* problem. For morality there is no problem of evil. Morality lives in the radical antithesis between good and evil, both of which are real to it, and real in the same degree. So long as we are struggling to overthrow evil, there is no mystery about our antagonist. We see reality in the guise of two opposing forces.

Nor, again, is there any problem of evil for science. It is no part of the province of science to justify the ways of God to man, or to explain the fact of "sin", a word which has no place in her vocabulary. In the physical world, that which *is*, is always what ought to be, or rather the term "ought" is quite out of place in physics. Science never asks "Why", but only "What" and "How".

The problem of evil is essentially a religious problem. An imperfect world is, as I have shown, no problem to morality. But the object of religious worship must be the really existing embodiment of our highest ideals. A limited, imperfect, struggling God would not be God at all. And on the other hand, if God is the Absolute, evil, like everything else, must be a manifestation of His nature. To put it shortly, God

is not God unless He is all in all, but a God who is all in all is not the God of religion. No attempts to overcome this difficulty are really successful. Many Christian thinkers have found help in Lotze's great effort to reconcile Monism and Pluralism. It is argued that God may have created, by an act of self-differentiation, a multitude of spirits endowed with partial independence. This is certainly a correct account of what appear to be the conditions under which we live; but it does not explain how a perfectly good and omnipotent Being could tolerate actual sin; it does not, so to speak, relieve Him of His responsibility for it.

A great deal of what we call evil is manifestly inseparable from the conditions under which we live. If "an evil is a fact which drives us to some other fact for its own justification, and for the satisfaction of our will" (Royce's definition), every temporal and finite fact must be, in its degree, evil. The larger our ideals, the greater must be the amount of dissatisfaction and "evil" in our experience of their non-attainment. And much of our dissatisfaction is caused by defects which are inherent in our present form of consciousness. Nothing temporal can really satisfy us. And, moreover, we can see that the happiness of eternity can only be gained through the sorrows of time. So far as our knowledge goes, the highest perfections always include in themselves the results of a victorious struggle. Were there no striving in time, there would be no peace in eternity. Even the "Captain of our Salvation" was "made perfect through suffer-

ings"; and many profound thinkers have believed that God, as God, must know and feel sorrow, since otherwise He would be a stranger to the highest gladness, which consists of seeing sorrow turned into joy.

Such considerations may smooth away some difficulties in connexion with the problem of evil. But after all it cannot be said that recent philosophy has done much towards the solution of this time-honoured problem, and it would probably be a mistake to attribute widespread influence to any recent speculative or critical writings on the subject.

It would manifestly be impossible to say the same of Biblical criticism and of natural science. Both these branches of study have made their influence felt upon the Christian doctrine of sin, and it is no longer possible to ignore the questions raised by them, even in popular teaching. The whole question of the "fall of man", as an historical fact, is involved, and so is the very important question as to whether sin is only imperfection, failure to reach one's proper level, or whether there is something more malignant and positive in it—something against nature and contrary to the mind of God, though permitted by His Will.

Until within living memory, a professed belief in the historical character of the first chapter of Genesis was expected of every Churchman. Mr. Tennant quotes an amusing passage from Bishop Bull, in which he extols the genius of Adam for giving names to animals which he had never seen before; and another

from South, saying that "An Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam, and Athens but the rudiments of Paradise!" It is needless to say that no authority for believing in the transcendent abilities of our first parent can be found in the Bible. But this notion was founded not unnaturally on what the Book of Genesis says of the state of Adam and Eve before the Fall; and if, as appears to be the case, it was generally held until the nineteenth century, it is manifest that the whole conception of the historical evolution of humanity has altered fundamentally since that period.

We must frankly take our choice between the Pentateuch and modern science—between the theory of a ruined human nature and the theory of a gradual development from lower forms. The narrative of the Fall is valuable as a dramatic representation—a mystery-play—of the psychology of temptation: as the first chapter of human history I believe that it has played its part, and I think the time has come when this fact should be candidly recognized. I say this because I think that a great deal of our Church-teaching about sin is hampered and vitiated by our reluctance to give up this ancient parable as a chapter of actual history. We have a real enemy to fight in the doctrine that sin is only imperfection. But we shall never come to close quarters with our opponents if we make it a point of honour to defend the historical character of the first chapters of Genesis, and to shape our theories to fit the story of Adam and Eve and the serpent.

A modern investigator who should set himself the task of determining the origin and nature of sin would conduct his inquiry partly on historical and partly on psychological lines. I am going to ask you to consider the matter for a few minutes from this side.

If we acquaint ourselves with the studies of naturalists we shall find that in very humble forms of life, natural needs are already at work, developing by slow degrees those qualities which in their higher stages appear as moral virtues. Sympathy (perhaps the most satisfactory equivalent of the Greek word *ἀγάπη*, which appears too narrow if translated by "charity", and too vague and sentimental as "love")—sympathy is first manifested in parental care. In place of the enormous fertility, and not less enormous squandering of life, which characterize the lowest types, we find in the more favoured species a varying degree of care and contrivance on the part of the parents for the preservation of their young. In some cases it is only a mechanical expedient for saving the eggs by retaining them longer in the body of the mother; but in more highly-organized types we find such examples of ingenuity and parental solicitude as the nest of the bird, and the supply of milk with which the young of mammals are nourished. This parental care, brief and unemotional in some of Nature's less-favoured experiments, such as the monotremata, becomes genuine affection and heroic self-sacrifice in the higher mammals and birds. In mankind the demands made on the parent are the most exacting of

all, and the response to the demands is the most beautiful and tender. Nor is parental affection able to attain such exquisite development without awakening analogous sympathies. Conjugal affection, instead of a periodic ebullition of animal inclination, followed by an interval of indifference, is capable of developing into a lifelong union of steady affection and happy companionship. The rudiments of this virtue also are plainly discernible among the "lower animals". Again, the same delicacy of organization, which permits sympathy to arise and become a motive of action within the family, enables the individual to enter into friendly relations with his fellows. Groups are formed —the hive, the pack, the herd, the tribe, the nation. Fellow-feeling makes men not at first "wondrous kind", but less wondrously cruel than in savage societies. The vanquished are spared in war; slavery is abolished or made more humane; the unfortunate and suffering are cared for; even criminals are less harshly dealt with; finally, even the lower animals are admitted into the sphere of moral relations, and cruelty to them is reprobated. The sense of *duty* is fostered by public opinion, by imitation, by authority, by habit. The feeling of self-respect becomes an important motive of action; men become their own judges, and the *beauty* of goodness shines before men's eyes as an ideal never to be relinquished. So, from the simple half-blind fostering care which creatures of low organization show to their offspring, we trace rising in infinite gradations the achievements

not only of civilization, but of the highest spiritual life. Ultimately we reach a point in which the endowments of the organism seem altogether too great and august for its environment. The soul stretches forth its hands towards the infinite.

In all the course of the evolution of morality and spirituality we can trace a double movement—expansive and intensive. The sense of social duty expands. Its sphere, which was at first the family, becomes the tribe, and then the nation. It may come to be the whole of humanity, or the whole of sentient nature. On the other hand, the sense of personality, of individuality, which at first was very weak, has become more and more intense as man has advanced from barbarism to civilization.

The sense of sin seems to be closely connected with this double movement, and to be generally awakened by a felt discord or conflict between the claims of others and those of self. Generally our conscience accuses us of giving too much preponderance to what we owe to ourselves. The instinct of self-preservation is not dependent on a highly-developed consciousness of personality; it is natural to man, and at first is neither moral nor immoral. It is when "the law", as St. Paul calls it, makes its voice heard; in other words, when we become conscious of obligations running counter to our natural impulses, that sin becomes "alive". We then have to choose between the law in our members and the law of our mind. From the feeling of unhappiness and strain which results

from this dual control arises the sense of sin. The dual self is the explanation of our problem, so far as it can be explained. It is a condition which seems to belong to a state of change—not necessarily a state of progress, but a state of change, of unstable equilibrium. An angel, a devil, a beast, does not *sin*. A being, or a species, is capable of sin when it is capable of rising above its present condition, or of falling below it. Herein lies, it seems to me, the true meaning of the doctrine of original sin. The self is, after all, one, not two, and the enemy against whom we have to contend is part of ourselves. We must identify ourselves either with that which would draw us up, or with that which would drag us down. We find the "law in our members" as a part of ourselves from the first; and yet we cannot consent to its dictates as natural and right without being guilty of treason against the "law of our mind". Such acquiescence becomes sin in the will which consents to it. A struggle against what seems part of our nature is therefore entailed upon us all.

Whatever may be the case with organisms higher and lower than ourselves, the equilibrium of human character is never stable. The masters of the spiritual life are fond of insisting we cannot mark time, or stay where we are; that we must always be getting either worse or better. This is not merely an unproven *dictum* of theologians; it is a necessary consequence of the law of habit. Any action once done is repeated next time with less effort; as habits become formed,

action grows more and more mechanical. Effort subsides into habit, habit becomes character; and character becomes again mere nature—a lower self to be overcome and turned into something better. We are always either rising on "stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things", or sinking in the same way to lower things. For do not let us think only of the bright side of the law. Seneca long ago described the dark converse of it when he said, "Wretchedness is consummated when our vices not only please but satisfy us, and there is no longer place for repentance when what were our faults become our characters." There is then a worse state than sinning, for sin implies a moral choice, and it is possible to sink below the possibility of choosing. This must be what the New Testament in one place calls "eternal sin". On the other hand, when good and kindly thoughts, words, and actions become automatic, they cease to be moral; morality then renews its conflict with sin on a higher level. Looked at from this point of view, we see the truth of the Christian doctrines, that no one can say that he is without sin; that the strife must go on till the end of life; and that what would now be called the solidarity of the race is a very important factor in the moral life.

Does this view of sin resolve it into mere imperfection? Is sin merely the survival of tendencies which were formerly beneficial, but which are no longer so, the environment having changed? In other words, is sin something which, under the given circumstances, ought not

to be there, or is it only something which under more favourable circumstances would not be there? This is really the battle-ground on which Christianity has a vital truth to defend. We are concerned to maintain that sin is not mere imperfection, but misgrowth, disease, death.

The doctrine that sin is only privation of good or imperfection has appeared under various forms. A common and popular argument is that imperfection or limitation is the necessary character of any finite world, and that therefore God could not have created a world without imperfection, nor can He be said to be the cause of the imperfection, any more than the sun is the cause of darkness and cold. The objections to this argument are obvious. Evil is *not* the same as finitude or limitation. The theory does not fit the facts which it has to explain. Some of the worst sins—treachery, revenge, murder, robbing the poor—are not mere shortcomings. It would be absurd to describe them as failures to attain absolute perfection. Take the career of Napoleon, or any other great and bad man. These scourges of humanity had a superabundance of life and energy and will-power. Their talents were misdirected, not defective. Moreover, even in the case of those faults which might seem to have the nature of imperfection—such as cowardice or sloth—the sin may be, and often is, the result of a fierce battle between the higher and lower natures; or if not, it shows that selfishness has gained a positive ascendancy which cannot be described in the language of negation. Another objection, even more fatal,

is that the whole idea of sin requires that it shall be the failure to win some attainable, not some unattainable good. Sin is not the failure to possess the attributes of God, but the failure to show the attributes which should belong to ourselves. It is not sin in the earthworm that he cannot fly, nor in a savage that he goes to war without an ambulance train. Sin is failure to achieve *relative*, not absolute perfection. There may be a perfect tree as well as a perfect flower. The perfection of a child is not the same as the perfection of a man. Jesus increased in wisdom and stature; but His life was perfect from the beginning—perfect at every stage through which He passed.

Another view is more metaphysical. It is said that evil is not merely unreal, but unreality as such. It is the unreal, assuming the guise of the real. This is the pantheistic theory of the universe, which in reality makes the words "good" and "evil" meaningless. It describes evil as nought, and in so doing unintentionally reduces good to nought also.

For, as I have said already, morality only lives in the radical antithesis between good and evil, and by reducing evil to a shadow we deprive goodness of its substance. The higher we advance in the scale of being, the more strident does the clash of "yes" and "no" appear. Spirituality does not float us away into the blue sky, leaving the earth-born mists far below us. On the contrary, it sifts experience ever more and more searchingly, making sin appear exceeding sinful. It was no mere phantom, no

unsubstantial shadow, which required the life-blood of the Son of God to overcome it. He did overcome it; but it is only the sharpest discord, the profoundest of all contradictions, the most irreconcilable of all enmities, that could demand such a sacrifice to terminate and destroy it.

If it be asked whether sin is or is not contrary to the Will of God, perhaps we may answer that it is contrary to the mind of God, but not to His Will. The Will of God is as much realized in the negative as in the positive operation of His laws,—in the punishment of guilt as in the reward of goodness; but sin is by definition that which is contrary to the mind of God—that which is no part of His plan for the creatures whom He has made.

Should we be justified in saying that sin is all conduct which is unfavourable to the survival of the race? That the foundation of right conduct is the desire of racial self-preservation, and that sin is whatever hinders it? The answer to this question will lead us farther than at first appears. Is survival the one object of Nature? Are we to pronounce that when a species has become extinct, Nature has executed a sentence of condemnation upon it, and stamped it as a failure? It is often assumed that this is so, and that it would be impious to doubt the unlimited progress of humanity in the future. Even scientific men, who are well aware of the doom which, so far as our knowledge goes, has been passed upon our planet, and all the other ponderable matter in the universe, rebel against this final failure of all human effort, and speak as if what they call

"progress" was to be continued for an indefinite period.

I must say a few words on this subject of progress, which is closely connected with the view of sin as imperfection, which we are considering. In the temporal order God's will is always expressing itself. At every instant, some finite end, purposed by God, is in process of realization. In this sense there is always progress. But those who hold that there can be no Divine meaning in the universe unless everything that comes later in time is better and nearer to God's perfection than that which preceded it are clearly wrong. Progress is one aspect of the temporal order; decay is another. Death is no accident, no penalty, but as much the law of the universe as life. And if new objects of value come into being every year, yet by the same law "all things are taken from us, and become portions and parcels of the dreadful past". Observation gives no countenance to the view that the movement from worse to better is the rule, and that from better to worse the exception. I do not know whether we still flatter ourselves that we are a progressive nation; in any case the greater part of the world has had little share in what we call progress. And look at what, on this theory, must be called Nature's failures. The whole history of parasitism is enough to condemn the theory that mere survival is success. Perpetual continuance in being is no part of Nature's scheme for the race, any more than for the individual. We fulfil our destiny, not by living

anyhow, but by living in a certain way, as men. There is an idea of humanity in the mind of God, and we please Him and fulfil His purpose in so far as we carry out that idea. Every individual, and every species, has its appointed time of life—its span of time in which to make the best of itself; and then, in accordance with God's law, it disappears. Sin, therefore, is not that which hinders the survival of the race, but that which tends to frustrate God's plan for the race, and God's picture of what humanity should be.

But why is the acceptance of this finite, temporal, relative perfection so unwelcome to us? Why does the sentence "thus far and no farther", so reasonable, it would seem, in the case of weak creatures like ourselves, sound so cruel that we rebel against it? It is because the human spirit has risen so far that it demands extra-temporal and extra-spatial correspondences. Somehow or other we have the power to transcend the limits of our narrow individuality, and to find ourselves in that which seems to lie beyond us. We have come to claim the infinite as part of ourselves, and ourselves as part of the infinite. The dual self, which appears as a fact of consciousness at a much earlier stage, now seems to link us both with heaven and with hell—the top and bottom of our nature seem poles asunder. We are given a finite plan of God to carry out in our lives—yes; but God has taken us into His counsels; He has let us see part of His plan, and henceforth *we* are something more than the finite idea

which we are to realize; we can see that idea, which is ourselves, in its eternal relations. Our own greatness and our own meanness become manifest to us with appalling clearness. So long as we are wholly concerned with satisfying our bodily needs, with living and bringing up families, the sense of sin is not acute. But when, even in a slight and faint degree, we can say with Job, "I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee," we must needs continue as he did, "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." This feeling of self-abasement is, it must be confessed, wholly disproportionate to the defects which caused it, so long as we confine our notions of God's purpose in and for us to the insignificant part which we have to play in this life. Our abasement and repentance then seem morbid and unreasonable, and the demands which we make upon ourselves, and upon the scheme of things in our own behalf, seem morbid and unreasonable too. The sense of sin belongs to an order of value-judgements which human life, judged from the outside, does not justify. It looks like and is the attaching of an infinite value to finite experiences. When we realize this fully, a great deal is explained.

The sense of sin, then, is one side of the enormous heightening of ethical values, which results from the conviction that we are immortal spirits. Feelings which would be overstrained and even absurd in the absence of this conviction, become natural and reasonable in its presence.

But it may be said, we grant you the existence

of these overweening notions of our own importance, and of the infinite value of our conduct and characters. What you have to prove is that these notions are true, or at least that they are compatible with good sense and soberness of mind. Men set up an impossible standard of perfection, which they were never intended to reach, and, measuring their performance by this standard, they find not only shortcomings, but aberrations and crimes. Cut down your estimate of human nature to that which reason and experience dictate, and you will see your so-called sins in their true light, as survivals, imperfections, which have nothing tragic or terrible about them, any more than the physical limitations which we accept without murmuring.

Well, let us consider whether this enhancement of values, beyond the measure of our common experience, is a thing which we can avoid, or not. When we observe the habits of the lower animals in their normal condition (we must make an exception in the case of those which we have domesticated and taught new habits), we find no tendency to excess, no disorder, no vice. They follow their instincts, and live the lives which, to all appearance, God intended their species to live. But with mankind it is not so. Man pursues greed, lust, or ambition with just the same disproportionate avidity with which he pursues the perfection of his own being. The harmony of existence is everywhere disturbed by this propensity to excess, which we do not find in the brutes. Moreover, it produces a phenomenon which is

very puzzling to those who hold simple views about progress. The highest animals and the most primitive savages are not as a rule very cruel or lustful. The most hideous customs which degrade humanity are, historically, retrogressions; the tribes which are guilty of them were once free from them. Cannibalism, infanticide, the fiendish pleasure of inflicting prolonged tortures on a prisoner—these and other abominations are not natural; they are not beastly—it would be a libel on the brutes to use such an adjective. They are the result of misapplying to base ends faculties which were given us for larger ends than individual satisfaction. It is not in our power to choose whether the infinite element in us shall seek satisfaction or not. It will seek satisfaction. The only question is whether it will seek it where it can be found. Desire for the infinite can only be quenched by enjoyment of the infinite; the ever-expanding life of sympathy can only find its goal and complete satisfaction in union with perfect Love; man was made for God, and his heart must remain unquiet until it rests in God.

It is an illuminating saying of Leibnitz, that "metaphysical evil consists in imperfection, physical in suffering, moral in sin". Evil *is* imperfection, since we are bidden to be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. It *is* suffering; for God has attached happiness to right conduct, and sends no suffering without good cause. But to identify sin with imperfection, or with suffering, is to confound different aspects or orders of experience.

Sin is whatever hinders the realization of the idea of humanity in the largest possible number of cases. This is one of the two points which I have been most anxious to emphasize. The other is that the growth of the sympathetic faculties in man, which we have traced to a very humble origin, eventually lifts him above the bourne of time and place into relations with the eternal world, and communion with God, who is Love; and that it is only from the standpoint of these eternal relations that the Christian consciousness of sin is at all intelligible. In that world, into which we are permitted to gaze, the relative values of things are very different from the standard which prevails on this earth. Moral distinctions are seen to be of infinite importance; and this is after all what the human mind has striven to express in some of the rather crude doctrines which I have criticized. And since no deliverance from sin can be effected until we have come to realize what sin is in God's sight, we can see that in learning what Divine Love means we are learning how to overcome evil with good. It was Jesus Christ who taught us the meaning of Divine Love; and therefore it is He who has saved His people from their sins.

PERSONAL IMMORTALITY

Rev. V. F. Storr, M.A.

Personal Immortality is the subject of the present paper; and all will agree, I think, with me in admitting that no other immortality is worthy of consideration. An immortality which does not guarantee our survival as self-conscious, personal beings, is not an immortality which can satisfy the needs and aspirations of humanity. If we assume for the moment that immortality is our destiny, it may well be that our existence in that other life will be something different from what it is here, with larger energies, and perhaps a more intimate union with others. We may be possessed of a wider and more universal mode of being; but we cannot believe that it will be less than personal, and it must retain some continuity with our earthly life here. For whatever changes come into our life, we, as persons, recognize that life as one and continuous. That is what you mean by being a person, that you retain your identity throughout all the stages of growth through which you pass.

I propose to begin by asking, What are the main arguments in favour of the belief that man, as a personal being, is immortal, and that his essential life is untouched by the experience of death? The belief is one which appeals to all

of us, or to nearly all of us. There can be few who, in their best moments, would not wish it to be true. Can we justify this strong conviction, this ardent hope, by any valid arguments? For a bare hope cannot completely justify itself. The wishes of men that a thing may be true do not always warrant us in believing that it is true.

I venture to submit to you the following arguments, as strongly reinforcing our natural belief.

1. *The argument from the worth of man.* Man as he is, and, more markedly, man as he may become, is the best witness to his own immortality. Now it is a fact that we do habitually recognize a worth in human personality higher than that which we attribute to anything else in the world. A person interests us in a unique way. It is in the society of other persons that we can alone realize the meaning of our own life. The ideal of marriage, for example, is that one personality should find its meaning in another personality. And the value of moral character is, surely, admitted by every one. Man, whatever his failures may be, is a being capable of magnificent spiritual achievements. He can pray, can hold communion with God, and is haunted by the sense that his life is rooted in, and encompassed by, the life of a larger spiritual being. Fellowship with God is his prerogative. He knows and appreciates the difference between right and wrong: the world wears for him a moral colour. He can blaze into righteous anger at the sight of evil-doing. He can cheerfully

undergo, nay choose, extremes of self-sacrifice. His power of love is wonderful in its purity and tenderness.

Above all, he dreams of magnificent destinies, is a creature of spiritual ideals, which he longs more and more to realize. Such is his moral and spiritual value, that he refuses to believe that death can extinguish him. Can the physical dissolution of the body, we ask, destroy a being of such ethical and religious worth?

An attempt is often made to minimize the force of this appeal to man's spiritual worth, by emphasizing his insignificance in comparison with the material universe. Our planet is but a mere speck in a boundless universe of suns and planets, one of the most insignificant of them all; and human history, we are told, is but "a murmur of gnats, in the gleam of a million million of suns". The laws of Nature operate, regardless of man and his interests. The pestilence strikes down good and bad alike. No prayer from holy lips avails to calm the hurricane or arrests the landslip. No cry of penitence will save a drowning man. Nature knows nothing of providential care for mankind. She is a great machine, and her wheels grind on, heedless whether or no they crush a human being under them. Certainly the revelations of physical science in these modern days have tended to create a temper of mind which is largely sceptical as to the value of man in this gigantic physical universe. But the doubt is not, in itself, a new one. The writer of the eighth psalm felt it, when he looked up to the midnight skies, with their hosts of stars, and

cried, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" It is a doubt, which has been present all down the history of human thought, though it is perhaps especially active to-day.

How are we to answer this doubt? Is it a really valid objection to the argument which we are pursuing? I cannot see the force of the objection. Those who feel it are trying to compare two things which do not lend themselves to comparison. Over against *physical* vastness they set *moral* worth, and between the two there is no common element. We live in two worlds—a world of matter, to which our bodies belong, and a world of spirit, the world of prayer and ideals, of moral action, and aspiration. The standards which apply to the world of matter do not apply to the world of spirit. That inner world stands alone, with its own worth, its own experiences. The approaching tidal wave may overwhelm me, but if I meet its coming calmly, and with moral courage, I prove my essential superiority over Nature. I conquer Nature at the very moment in which she seems to conquer me. The contrast between the immensities of Nature and the physical insignificance of man only serves to emphasize his true dignity. It is the spiritual character of man which is the ground of our belief in his immortality.

This is always the view of the Bible. In so far as the Old Testament writers rose to any real conception of immortality (and we must admit that their hope was dim), the basis of their conviction was that man could hold communion with God. Such was his spiritual value

that he was capable of this fellowship, and God, who made death, could not allow death finally to interrupt that communion. And the same consideration of the worth of the individual being, as a child of God, underlay all our Lord's teaching upon the subject of eternal life.

We need not, then, be dismayed by the revelations which physical science has given us as to the vastness of the physical order. And we may go further, and may thank science for another discovery, which very materially reinforces our belief. I refer to the conception of evolution, which, though not promulgated for the first time by science, has received through biology such confirmation and illustration, as to make it a new truth for this and the preceding generation.

We now—most of us at any rate—believe that all living organisms, man included, have evolved or developed slowly from very lowly and rudimentary forms of life. All the rich variety of the organic world is the outcome of long periods of slow change, during which the original germs of life have gradually grown more complex and more highly endowed, until at last they have culminated in man, the crown of the series. And if, taking a wider sweep, our minds survey the whole story of this universe, so far as we can reconstruct it, we seem to find ourselves in presence of a great world-process, a vast drama of development, which is being slowly worked out through the centuries. First the inorganic; then the organic; then man, moral and self-conscious. As we look back upon the whole movement we cannot help reading the

earlier stages in the light of the later, seeing in them just so many successive steps towards the production of man. Man becomes for us the goal of the striving of the past. And the question at once occurs to us—Was it worth while to spend so much trouble upon the making of man, if a few short years of earthly life are all that are to be his? Does not his position, as the crown of a long antecedent development, indicate that a still more glorious future awaits him? His animal ancestry is no disgrace. A lowly beginning cannot discredit a noble ending. However he has come to be what he is, he is to-day the being of spiritual worth which we have described—

"The heir of hopes too fair to turn out false."

2. *The argument from the incompleteness of human life.* Consider this next. We need touch on this argument but briefly, for it stands in intimate connexion with the other argument, which we have just been handling. Human life for any thoughtful observer spells incompleteness. What songs your poet dying at twenty-five might have sung, had he lived to be fifty! What social reforms your reformer might have achieved, if the fell stroke of disease had not carried him off! What loss of energy, what waste of power, we exclaim, as we observe the ravages caused by death. Wherever we look, there is this incompleteness in human life—truth pursued, but not attained; moral character half formed, not completed; splendid possibilities of achievement, but not time enough in which to realize them. Nature's apparent wastefulness in the lower

circles of her existence has long been a puzzle, and the difficulty increases, directly you are dealing with human lives. For not only have they a worth, a moral and spiritual worth, but every human being has it in him to grow, to develop, to become more of a moral and spiritual being.

I grant you, that a survey of the inhabitants of this world, as they are at this moment, does not necessarily lead us to infer that all are immortal. The babe just born, who dies before it has become a conscious or moral being; the idiot; the savage with his animalities and brutality—you may well argue that these have not the worth which would justify us in regarding them as immortal. But then, they all have the *capacity* for development: they are incomplete beings. Put them in the conditions favourable for growth, and they will at once begin to show themselves possessed of increasing worth and significance. We cannot but feel that, with a continuance of life, and with larger opportunities, man might rise to far loftier heights of attainment moral and intellectual. To call a moral personality into being, and then to deny him the chance to mature, seems hardly consonant with the belief that the world serves a moral purpose. And it is not enough to say that those who perish help on the general advance. That may be true of lower organisms, but it does not satisfy us in the case of man, just because of the inherent worth of any personality.

3. Consider, thirdly, *the ethical demand for judgement and retribution*; and note that Christ

put in the forefront of His teaching the conception of Judgement, and of Himself as Judge. Morality is part of the essential meaning of life. Human life serves a moral purpose. That has been the verdict of the race, if they have thought at all. Yet, morally, the world is "out of joint". Flagrant evil-doing escapes apparently unpunished. Righteousness is not rewarded. The claims of virtue and happiness are not satisfactorily adjusted on earth. Men demand—it is an instinctive demand—a hereafter, where these inequalities shall be set right. They look for a vindication of the claims of the moral order. They ask that the Justice of God shall assert itself. There are two elements in the demand which man's moral reason makes in this matter. *Retribution* is looked for; and *Compensation* is looked for. You cannot, I think, get rid from man's moral consciousness of the demand for retribution, or punishment. Conscience, says Bishop Butler, goes on naturally to anticipate hereafter a verdict higher than its own. Morality involves the conception of law; and law ultimately involves the conception of law-giver, with power to punish. This at least would seem to be a permanent element in man's ethical theory of the world. We naturally personalize the moral order; relate it to the Will and Character of a Holy God; and conceive of Him as rewarding or punishing. We cannot say what form the punishment for evil-doing may take. I can conceive no worse punishment than that the conscience, which has persistently been disregarded, should, in the clearer light of a more

immediate Divine presence, awake in all its power, and that the man should realize his own unfitness for the new conditions in which he finds himself. Surely there will be then for him the gnawing of the worm of remorse, and the fire of self-accusation. Retribution therefore is imperiously demanded by man, in order to satisfy the requirements of his moral nature: and if it cannot be had here, then man postulates a hereafter, in which it may be realized.

But man also demands compensation. Virtue must be rewarded by happiness. Now compensation is usually interpreted by us in a crude and almost materialistic way. So much sorrow here, so much joy hereafter, to make up for it! We interpret the idea mechanically, according to a scale of equivalents, or accurate proportions. But there is a different, and higher interpretation of compensation, which regards the suffering or the inequality as transmuted by us, in the very act of bearing it, into rich material of character. As we pass through the valley of weeping we can make it a well. And we demand a hereafter, in which this process of transmutation shall be made fully visible; in which the fruits of character so formed shall endure, in which nobility of soul shall be seen and approved.

. . . . . .

These appear to me to be three of the main arguments of a natural theology in favour of immortality. They do not amount to a proof. Proof, in any sense of demonstration, is in this matter impossible. "If a man die, shall he live again?" We shall not *know* the answer to that

question until we come to die ourselves. But they furnish us with a hope, and a strong hope; and this hope is rendered all the more sure, when we remember the universality of the belief in immortality. Such exceptions as there are may practically be left out of account; so widespread in humanity, so native to the human mind, is this conviction of a life beyond the grave. We may legitimately ask—Is there to be no fulfilment of this quenchless longing and aspiration of humanity? I admit that a belief is not necessarily a true one, because all men hold it, and no wish, however passionate, guarantees the reality of its object. But in this case, God is behind the wish, the craving; and for those who believe in God's existence, the fact of the universality of the belief in immortality will be a strong evidence in favour of its validity. For ultimately human nature owes its being to God, and it is difficult to believe that He should plant an instinct, and give it no scope for satisfaction. We may think in this connexion of Christ's words to His disciples recorded in St. John xiv. 2—"If it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you." Is not this equivalent to saying, "Trust that instinct, that conviction, which you have about the hereafter. God is behind it. It will not deceive you"?

We cling, then, to our conviction, which, reinforced by Christianity, and by it for many minds rendered a certainty, has transformed the face of human life. Remove the belief in immortality, and then try to measure the blackness of the shadow which would fall across our existence.

Men will give up almost any belief rather than this one. For with it is bound up all that is most valuable in human life. This belief is the glowing torch, which each generation hands on to its successor, charging it to keep undimmed that sacred fire.

I pass now to consider one or two of the main difficulties which are pressing on men to-day, and which tend to make them sceptical about the doctrine of personal immortality. Many forces to-day contribute towards the production of the sceptical temper. Disbelief creeps on men almost without their being conscious of it: they seem to breathe it in with the atmosphere, which envelops them. But there are, I believe, two main difficulties, which can be pointed out and dealt with, and which, if they are removed, will render, for many minds at any rate, belief in personal immortality a far easier matter.

1. The first difficulty is the connexion which exists between mind and brain, between the spiritual and physical series.

That there is this connexion is obvious. Our whole conscious life seems to rest upon a physical basis, and to depend on brain. Injury to the brain results in a weakened mental life, or in the loss of faculties. One of the chief advances made by the closely allied sciences of psychology and physiology consists in the demonstration of the intimate connexion which exists between mind and brain, a connexion which science would like to extend to its fullest possible scope, so that for every change in the mental or physical sphere, there should be demonstrable a corre-

sponding change in the physical or brain-sphere.

What, then, of immortality in the face of this connexion? Does the man live on when his brain crumbles into dust? Can we exist as conscious persons without a brain? If a brain is necessary to thought, can we assert that God will give us a new brain, or its equivalent, hereafter? Are we not after all only dust, and to dust shall we not return?

These are questions which crowd into our minds, and we cannot answer them. Ultimately we have to confess ignorance. We must simply say that we do not know what the connexion between mind and brain is, and cannot describe the mode of our future life, supposing that we have one.

This seems an unsatisfactory position; but a little closer examination of it will reveal the illegitimacy of some of the conclusions reached by a materialistic science.

What we do know about the connexion of mind and brain is this, that mind depends for its present *manifestation* upon a brain structure, and that it is *conditioned* in its growth and activity by a brain. But until you can affirm that it depends for its *existence* upon molecular movements in the brain, you have no warrant whatever for denying immortality. Mind may have other modes of existence. Its connexion with brain may be only a temporary mode incident to a passing phase in a life which stretches out over far greater periods. In other words, until it can be shown that mind cannot exist

except under its present form, in which it is tied to a brain, there is no disproof of immortality.

The materialistic and sceptical argument urges that consciousness depends entirely upon, and is caused by, the physical changes which go on in the cells of the brain. But I can attach no meaning to such a statement. Surely mind is a real existence. Whatever it may be, it is active and leads a life of its own, and to treat it, with the materialist, as purely passive, to make it depend entirely upon the brain, is to cease to regard it as mind. Further, how is one to conceive of a physical happening or change in my brain causing a change in my mind, which is not physical, and which cannot therefore be treated as a term in a physical process of causation?

That mind and brain interact is probably the truest statement which we can make concerning their mode of interconnexion, but the nature of the interaction we cannot further define. The precise character of the correlation between the two factors remains a mystery. All we can say is, that consciousness is here, in our earthly life, partially conditioned by a physical or brain basis. But, note, it is equally possible to maintain that mind causes change in brain. In this case you make mind the active, causal power, and the physical series the passive recipient. And you might regard the brain as the clog on the pure activity of mind. On this view (equally tenable with the other), brain is the organ through which mind expresses itself. If the mind possessed a better organ, it might express

itself more freely and adequately. But as it is, until death sets it free, it is hampered and inhibited at every turn. We may borrow an illustration, which has, I believe, been used in this connexion before. The wind blows through the strings of a harp, and the strings sound. The more numerous and delicate the strings, the greater is the variety of tone elicited. In the same way, the brain may be regarded as a harp through which the wind of consciousness blows. It can obtain from it only certain responses. But with a finer instrument you would obtain a finer result. One day, when the gross veil of the material is torn asunder, God may give us a new brain, to be a more perfect expression of the free spirit behind it.

Death destroys the brain, and with it takes away the power of the self to prove its existence to those who are still alive. But there is no valid ground whatever for saying that personality and consciousness and memory vanish, just because the brain is destroyed. The brain is "of the earth, earthy". Personality belongs to a spiritual order of existence.

2. The second difficulty also comes to us from the side of science. By an appeal to Nature's methods of operation, and to the scale on which she works, an attempt is made to destroy the significance of individuality, whether among men or among the lower animals. We are pointed to the fierce struggle for existence which goes on in Nature, where every organic species competes with every other for a foothold in the world. In this struggle (and we cannot, I think,

deny that the struggle exists) the unfit go to the wall. There is no hope for them. Nature is remorseless, and her care does not seem to be at all for the individual, but only for the species. She is "careful of the type" but "careless of the single life". Her car of Juggernaut sweeps by, crushing at each moment a hundred bodies. What matters it? The individual is nothing. One by one these individual lives emerge out of the background of darkness, take up the torch of life, wave it for a few moments, and then pass out again into the eternal gloom. And we are asked to remember that these operations of Nature include man. He too is only a temporary phenomenon. The race may be eternal, but the individual is nothing; nothing but a temporary embodiment of racial forces and tendencies (so many modern theories of heredity tell us); with no worth or value of his own.

But we are often apt to forget that, when man emerged upon the scene, he introduced into the struggle for existence some elements which very considerably modified it. If Nature cares nothing for the single life, it is just that which ethical man has learned to care for. So soon as man became a moral being, the law of struggle was no longer the only law which dominated his existence. It was traversed by other laws, the laws and principles of morality; and in virtue of his morality man's individuality won a new worth and meaning.

It is not surprising that science should thus tend to disparage individuality, wherever she

finds it; for, after all, her interest is to discover general laws. The individual, be it atom, or rose, or man, is valuable to science only as an example or illustration of a general conception or law. The *individuality* of any object does not interest science. She sees in the individual only its general or class characteristics. But it is just the individuality of things which gives to life its varied content, and to our experiences their significance. Certainly, we are interested profoundly in our own individuality, and in that of our friends and neighbours; and I like to think that, as we go down the scale, there is nothing which has not its own peculiar individuality, that there are no two blades of grass alike, no two leaves identical. Is it an impossible conception, that every form of existence is, in its degree, a reflection of the infinite individuality of God, and shares in His uniqueness; while to man it has been given to reflect His being most clearly; so that each single human being reflects God in his own special way, is a special facet of the great diamond of humanity, flinging back the Divine ray at its own peculiar angle? That position could, I believe, be defended philosophically. It certainly meets the religious sense of men, because it gives a significance and meaning to the whole of God's creation, and an especial significance to man, the crowning stage of the long upward development.

What I should like to point out, in conclusion, is, that one of the greatest contributions made by Christianity to this problem of human immortality, is the increased significance which

the Founder of that religion attached to every human being. He saw in every man a son of His Father, a unique son, who had his own special place to fill in the world, and his own work to do. The infinite value of the single soul was one of Christ's great—if unformulated—arguments in favour of personal immortality. In insisting, then, upon individuality as the word which best expresses the meaning of existence, we find ourselves in line with the consciousness of the greatest religious teacher whom the world has ever seen.

This mention of our Lord's teaching about the worth of the individual forms a convenient bridge of transition to the very few remarks which I have to offer about the more specifically Christian belief in immortality. It is of set purpose that I have treated the question from the standpoint of a natural, rather than a revealed religion; because we shall all agree that, if a person is ready to accept the truth of the Resurrection story, then for him his native conviction of immortality is enormously reinforced. It becomes for him a practical certainty. But his acceptance of that story will, I suppose, largely depend upon his general estimate of Christ's Person; and a discussion of that problem would involve us in an almost endless task. All that I want to say about the Christian belief is this, that I do not think we must regard the belief in the Resurrection as the real basis of it. Even if Christ had not risen, there would surely have still been the belief in individual immortality. Christ's teaching on the point would

be left us, and that is very considerable. At the same time, once you are ready to accept the fact of Christ's resurrection (and it appears to me that we are bound to accept it; for otherwise I cannot see how you are to explain the existence of the Christian Church), your belief takes a new colour and vitality. But, for the purpose of this paper, I merely ask—what was the specifically Christian contribution to the problem before us, other than the witness of the empty tomb?

1. We have already mentioned one very important element—the enhanced value given to the individual. I am inclined to think that this is second in importance to nothing which Jesus taught upon this matter.

2. Closely connected with this is the doctrine of a future judgement which is an integral part of Christ's teaching. The founder of the religion therefore reinforced the demands for retribution and reward which, as we have seen, man's moral reason is compelled to make.

3. As the basis of the whole, perhaps, stands our Lord's teaching about the new life, a life which man could begin to have here and now, and which would ripen hereafter in fuller measure. Its Eternity was one of quality as well as duration. Eternal Life involved immortality, because such life came from God. It was the Divine gift to man, and hence it could not perish, and he who possessed it could not be harmed by death.

4. Lastly, as Salmond has pointed out in *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, Christianity

has "translated a guess, a dream, a longing, a probability, into a certainty. It has done this, by interpreting us to ourselves, and comfirming the voice of prophecy within us." This is an illustration of how Christianity came "not to destroy, but to fulfil," to confirm and deepen whatever in human nature was high and noble, and to set man forward on a path of progress in matters spiritual, which knows no arrest until Christ's own word is realized—"Ye shall therefore be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

The foundation of all our arguments, and all our beliefs, is a moral trust in God. He who believes in immortality, does so because he believes in God. And so we cry with assurance—

> "Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
> Thou madest man, he knows not why:
> He thinks he was not made to die;
> And Thou hast made him: Thou art just."

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

Rev. Canon Masterman, M.A.

A religion that claims to exercise any influence on the actual lives of men must be prepared to find some answer to two importunate questions:—Why do men suffer? and Why do men sin? The problem of suffering has occupied men's thoughts since the dawn of history; it is intimately associated with the first beginnings of religion, and with men's conception of sacrifice; it remains a perplexing enigma at the background of life among all thoughtful nations of the ancient world. It has inspired the great dramas of the world and has coloured its philosophies. But if I rightly judge, the problem of suffering presses with special insistence on the thought of our own generation. This is due in part, I would fain believe, to an increasing sensitiveness to the sufferings of others. We are, perhaps, learning a little more of what it means to bear the griefs and carry the sorrows of men. Men's consciences are being awakened to-day to a stronger realization of the inequalities of human condition, and of the apparent injustice of the order of things which seems to build up the life of the few on the suffering of the many. But I fear that the problem of suffering has become pressing in our own time for another and less worthy reason. Our age is impatient of the discipline of pain; we are clamorous for

enjoyment, eager to be amused. We do not face the sterner side of life with courage

"To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

Evidences of this shrinking from suffering are only too prominent all around us, and are ominous indications of the weakening of the moral fibre of the men of our own time; and in so far as our impeachment of the management of the universe is the outcome of a cowardly desire to snatch more than is justly our due of the pleasant things of the earth and to evade its discipline, the challenge of its steeper places —the call of its sterner contests—in so far we forfeit our right to any adequate reply to our impeachment. We are "not fit to hear ourselves convinced".

In yet another way the problem of suffering seems more baffling to-day than in former times. Wordsworth called the men of his time to throw off the burden of

"Sorrow barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities,"

in communion with the world of Nature. But this refuge seems to be denied to us now. The scarlet line of suffering is entwined with all the life history of the world. Fuller life means fuller capacity for pain. Under the apparent beauty and tranquillity of Nature wild things stalk their prey and wounded things suffer. In the face of all this suffering we are asked to believe in a God who is both omnipotent and good, "whose tender mercies are over all His works."

It is possible to evade the difficulty by denying the value of the individual life. If human life is an illusion and human personality a temporary phase of some vast cosmic process, then the sufferings of men may mean no more to God than the sufferings of the minute living things he crushes under his heel mean to the benevolent man who walks in his fields in the evening. But the Christian is specifically barred from taking refuge in this solution, for nothing is more fundamental in the Christian view of things than belief in the value of the individual. Christ taught men of a God who cares not only for humanity but also for people, who hears the child's sob in the silence and marks the unrecorded graves of the sparrows, who compasses about every human life with unrecognized ministries of good. The Christian man must reconcile the sufferings of the world with the God in whom Jesus Christ taught men to believe.

Now on the problem of suffering there is nothing new to be said; all that can be said now has been said many times, and we can only gather together into some kind of organized form the thoughts that every thoughtful man thinks when he has to face the problem of suffering in his own life or in the lives of others. But at the outset we are obliged to make a preliminary assumption. We have to assume that the purpose of life is not primarily enjoyment but education, or perhaps, more correctly speaking, that the true secret of enjoyment is in education, in the growing development of our faculties through the discipline of life. On any

other assumption than this the whole drama of life must remain meaningless. Even the hedonist is obliged to recognize that happiness depends far more on what we are than on what we have; far more on the positive good of those compensating elements that belong not to the outer but to the inner life, than on the mere negative good of the absence of suffering. But more than this. Not only is the purpose of life education; this educational purpose is twofold, and has relation to the race as well as to the individual—

> "Each of the many serves to recruit
> The life of the race, by a general plan,
> Each living his own to boot."

Many things in life that seem inexplicable are capable of an interpretation consistent with belief in the goodness of God when we come to realize that the well-being of the race may often be best furthered at the cost of the suffering of the individual; and this even when the suffering seems to the sufferer to have no intelligible purpose. It is the Christian's belief that the world has been so ordained that in the end the individual is neither sacrificed to the race nor the race to the individual; that God is neither "careless of the single life" nor indifferent to the good of the whole. And though this is, and must always remain, a venture of faith, it is a venture of faith for which a reasonable view of the world provides substantial justification.

Keeping these facts in mind we turn to consider the problem of suffering. There are two things that men in their hour of suffering ask

of God. We ask first of all to understand. "Why," we say, "has this come to us?" We feel that we could bear suffering if we knew the reason of it; if we felt that for us or for the world it served some intelligible purpose of good. But we also ask another thing. If God will not explain, it would be something to know that He could sympathize; that if suffering is mysteriously necessary, it is at least not the evidence of Divine indifference. First, then, how far is it possible to understand the meaning and purpose of suffering? And here it is important to distinguish between suffering that is the outcome of human neglect or deliberate action, and that over which man can exercise no control. The sum total of the preventable suffering of the world is stupendous. Man is the vicegerent of God in relation to the animal world, and for power misused to inflict pain he cannot impeach God. To some extent it seems to be true that man can only fulfil his purpose in the world at the cost of suffering to the lower animals, but there is a vast amount of suffering inflicted unnecessarily upon animals for the supposed enjoyment of man. And, again, for the preventable suffering which is the outcome of existing social conditions deliberately maintained for selfish ends in defiance of the Divine law of brotherhood; for the blind rage that fills the earth with the discord of battle; for the wanton cruelty that is willing to enjoy itself at the cost of suffering to others—for these things we must blame ourselves and not God. Indeed it is by our attitude towards these things that

our moral character is tested. They are a challenge to men who believe in God, a challenge to which even now the Church of Christ has only very inadequately responded. On this side the problem of suffering merges into the kindred problem of Free-will and Sin. But when all this has been said it yet remains true that there is a vast amount of suffering that cannot be directly attributed to any human agency. Man does not create the plague that devastates his home, or the drought that scorches his fields, or the earthquake that destroys his cities. It is not by man's arrangement that the beginning of human life is associated with suffering or its closing moments often with acutest agony. It is not by man's act that young lives are struck down by disease; that some sin with impunity, while others, less guilty, bear all their life long the bitter penalty of sin. And these are the things for which men have called God to answer at the judgement bar of Humanity.

We shall best begin to understand the problem by taking first the simplest case; that of physical pain. Here at all events we recognize that there are considerations to be taken into account before we convict the Power that rules the universe of the charge of wanton cruelty. For a very little observation suffices to show that physical pain serves useful purposes in the world; that, indeed, without physical pain it is difficult to see how life could be preserved in the world at all. For pain is Nature's danger signal; it guides the physician to the seat of mischief, it warns the careless against the misuse of their

faculties, it educates men both in courage and in caution. And again, consider how physical suffering becomes a challenge to us to assert at once our mastery and our sympathy. How many of the great discoveries of the world by which human life has been enriched have been the outcome of men's efforts to find methods of alleviating pain. A harsh man becomes gentle by the bedside of a suffering child. The whole machinery of service that lifts the world out of savagery is centred in the mystery of pain; for where none suffer, none serve, and where none serve humanity has lapsed into the beast again.

But what of the sufferer? Is he tortured only that others may learn the lesson of service? does he suffer only that others may be strong? The answer is not far to seek. However little we understand it, it is most certain that suffering develops faculties and powers that seem to be evoked in no other way. Pain may make a man fretful and peevish, self-centred and hard, but who does not know, and thank God for, temples of pain that are in very truth shrines of God? It is not only of the poet that it is true that he learns in suffering what he teaches in song. As Dr. Illingworth says in his essay in *Lux Mundi*, "The pleasures of each generation evaporate in air, it is their pains that increase the spiritual momentum of the world." And indeed in what other way can a man manifest the reality of his love for that which he cares for the most than by the way of pain? The true patriot-song is not in the roar of the multitudes in the street, but in the groan of the wounded on

the battle-field. A man's faith is not measured truly by what he professes but by what he endures. We measure cost in terms of money, but Heaven estimates it in the currency of pain, and even our political economists admit that Heaven's estimate is right. Then again, consider the mysterious association of suffering with gladness. The secret of enjoyment is not the absence of pain, but the presence of that sense of mastery which turns pain into exultation. The joy of the mountaineer is in the sense of conquest over limbs growing weary and breath growing short. The thrill of the "bared limbs bound fast for martyrdom" is the exultant thrill of victory over pain.

All this is true of pain that a man willingly accepts for himself as a means of some larger good for himself or for the world; but the outcome of human action is quite as often pain for others as pain for ourselves. I am coming back later to the problem of vicarious suffering; I only want now to say that the strongest incentive in most men's lives to right action is the fear of inflicting pain on the lives of others. A man may grow reckless if he feels that he alone must pay the price of his sin, but he is held back by the thought that the price must be paid by other lives than his own, and the price will be the greater in proportion as those lives are linked with his own in the bond of love. If it is important that men should be trained to do right, and that the path of evil-doing should be made difficult, we may see in the arrangement that visits the sins of the fathers upon the children at least

some indication of a Divine provision for holding back the fathers from sin. When all these considerations are given their due weight we begin to see that physical pain has a place in the education of the world, and that the mere abolition of pain would leave human life impoverished rather than enriched; and it is not unreasonable to infer that, in the case of these subtler and deeper forms of suffering that embitter and darken human life, a similar purpose of good might be traced if we could see clearly. But the furnaces where human souls are forged lie deeper under the surface than we can penetrate, and some of the darker problems of pain demand that we should "believe where we cannot prove". Yet, after all, these considerations do not bring us to the heart of our problem; for the real difficulty that men have felt and still feel to-day is the difficulty of the apparent inequality of human suffering, and the absence of any intelligible principle in the distribution of it. The attempt of the ancient world to associate the idea of special suffering with the idea of special sin breaks down when brought to the test of experience, nor will the opposite theory that special suffering accompanies, if it does not create, special sanctity bear the test of investigation. Frankly, we are unable to lay down any intelligible law governing the distribution of suffering among men; and over many sufferers, if not indeed over all, we feel that Christ might speak again the words spoken long ago to His perplexed disciples, "What I do thou knowest not now." Happy are we if we

have faith to believe that the promise also is true, "Thou shalt know hereafter." But is our inability to bring the fact of suffering under intelligible laws surprising? Are we not being taught every day the lesson of humility, warned against premature deductions and rash claims to understand how and why things are what they are? The Christian man who believes his life to be a mere segment of the perfect round, a few notes that are jangled in the long sweep of a great music, though he will not abandon the most earnest efforts to understand, will not be perplexed if these efforts leave him largely baffled at the end.

But is life worth living on such terms as these? Does not suffering exceed happiness in most men's lives? Are not the shady places more frequent than the spaces of sunshine? To this we might reply by reminding ourselves that men do live, and cling to life with strange tenacity, and front its suffering with courage, and bear these sorrows with hope. When he turns from the morbid imaginings of pessimistic philosophers to the real life of man, any careful observer must be conscious of a great sense of relief as he realizes how strangely full of real happiness life often is, even to those who from their external conditions might be expected to be weary of it all. It is not suffering, but idleness and detachment from the simpler joys of life, that most often produce world-weariness and pessimism.

But this brings us to a practical question. "What has actually proved the secret of endurance in the sufferings of the world"? I reply

without hesitation, "Belief in the sympathy of God." We can acquiesce in imperfect understanding, but we cannot acquiesce in the idea of a God who does not care. But how can we know that He cares? What evidence is possible? Can God move visibly among the sick in our hospitals, or weep with the bereaved in darkened houses, or bind up the feet of the little children along the rough ways of life? Can God suffer the bitterness of disappointment, the chill of the consciousness of love growing cold, the agony of degradation and death? These things belong to human life, they are the things we suffer as men in a world of men. Can God become a man in a world of men? The Christian creed tells us that nothing less than this did actually happen, that the one complete and adequate evidence of the love of God was given to all mankind when God gave His only begotten Son. The life and death of Jesus of Nazareth was either a great vindication of all pessimistic views of life, a final evidence of the reckless indifference of the gods, or it was the answer of God to the challenge and impeachment of humanity. Probably some of the hostility which men vaguely feel against religion is due to a feeling of something like jealousy of the tranquillity and power of God. We who struggle and suffer, to whom life is often hard and perplexing, find little help or relief in the contemplation of a God afar off in some serene heaven, encircled by the praises of angels and apparently indifferent to the sufferings of men. Some such picture of God is, I am sure, the picture that many men have

formed for themselves and have imagined to be the God whom Christians were inviting them to worship. Have Christian teachers always been adequately careful so to present the doctrine of the Atonement that it shall be a supreme revelation of the sympathy of God with the sufferings and needs of men? But we have not yet reached the heart of the matter. The life and death of Jesus Christ are a series of events that happened at a given period of time, and behind stretches a long record of suffering back to the beginning of things. Are we to believe that at last God awoke to the fact that the foundations of the world were out of course, and made a tardy reparation to His own creatures for the injury that He had done to them?

No! remember that striking phrase in the Book of Revelation, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It throws back the idea of the sacrifice of Christ into the eternal past. It teaches us to realize that Creation was built upon a foundation of sacrifice; that the mysterious law of suffering that lies so deep in the constitution of things is a copy of something deeper still in the very character of God. We see the Cross no longer as an isolated fact in history, but as included in the purposes of God from the beginning. It is the deepest law of the universe that all things exist that they may give, and realize themselves only in giving. It is on this point that Christian theology comes into harmony with the latest results of scientific thought. The phrase, "The struggle for existence," has been often misunderstood, and highly rhetorical

pictures have been drawn of a ferocious contest along the lower strata of existence, where the weak goes to the wall and the stronger asserts itself. This is of course due to a misconception of the word "struggle". For the most part in the lower orders of life the unfit fall out of the ranks by a painless process of extinction, and only in man does the struggle for existence become a deliberate and intelligent contest for success in a world governed by the principles of competition. But though this is so, it nevertheless remains true that science depicts the world of nature as a sphere of contest where each organism is blindly fighting for the right to live. But when we turn to the conception of the world of nature involved in the phrase I have just quoted, we find the corrective to the picture presented to us by science. For if the universe is built on the law of survival it is not less certainly built on the law of sacrifice. Organisms exist, not only that they may live, but also that they may give, and where giving ends living ends too. Deep down in the heart of things lies the vindication of the word of Christ, "He that loseth his life shall find it"—find it not only as the reward of losing it, but in the very act of losing it too.

It follows from all this that we must learn to look on suffering not only as the result of a dislocation in the scheme of things, but also as in some real sense part of the normal law of the universe. Perhaps the victory of the higher over the lower, and therefore the progress and evolution of the world, cannot but involve in

the process something that may be described as suffering. Whatever may be the purpose of this in the lower orders of life it is not hard to see that in man it develops the moral power of choice, and through choice shapes character, and through character controls destiny.

How then does the acceptance of Christian truth affect our views of suffering? Let me close by trying to summarize the answer to that question. First of all, I think, by permanently dissociating the idea of suffering from the idea of sin. I mean of course from the idea of personal sin. There is probably a very real and very deep sense in which suffering and sin are phases of the same truth, but the old taunt of Job's friends that a man who suffers most is by that very fact proved to have sinned most, is a taunt that Christianity has once for all laid to rest. Indeed it has been charged against Christianity that it is a religion that exalts pain, and that for the old aristocracy of wealth has substituted the new aristocracy of weakness. But however that may be (and we shall return to this point presently), it is certainly true that in the light of the Cross the Christian dare not say to any sufferer that by the very fact of his sufferings he is proved to have sinned. Then secondly, and this is, it seems to me, the central fact of Christianity, we have been taught to believe that God cares. Though there is much that is inexplicable in the story of the death of Christ, there is one fact that cannot be misunderstood—the fact that the death of Christ represented a supreme sacrifice on the part of God, that

sacrifice in which God identified Himself with the suffering of the world. And it is this, far more than any philosophical theory, that has been the strength and comfort of those who have suffered. Men have turned to the Cross in their hour of need, and it is because the world is so full of suffering that the Crucifix, and not the image of Christ in Glory or of the Babe in Bethlehem, has become the central symbol of Christianity. May I quote a few words from the Preface of Dr. Bigg's recent book on *The Church's Task under the Roman Empire.*

"The fundamental difference between heathenism of all shades and Christianity is to be discovered in the doctrine of Vicarious Sacrifice, that is to say, in the Passion of our Lord. If we ask what is *das Wesen des Christenthums*, this is surely the same thing as asking what is the specific difference between Christianity and any other religion. The old Logicians used to say that everything should be defined *per genus et differentiam*. Christianity is a religion; this is its *genus*, this it has in common with all other religions. It is the religion of Vicarious Sacrifice, or of the Cross, this is its *differentia*; in this addition lies the peculiar nature which makes it what it is, and distinguishes it from every other member of the same class.

"Now the Fatherhood of God, the immortality of the soul, revelation, are beliefs common to many religions. So again are sacrifice, prophecy, law. The belief that by virtue men become like God, children of God, and attain to communion with their divine Father, is a common-

place of Greek idealism, and is found in many of the better Pagan cults. The idea of a Messiah, again, is common to Judaism and Christianity, and something not wholly unlike it meets us in the 'inspired men' of Platonism, or the 'heroes' of Hellenism. But the Cross is the peculiar property of the Gospel. What the first Christians adopted as their emblem was not the portrait of Jesus, but simply the Cross without any portrait at all. It may be said that this peculiar feature of the Christian faith throws back light upon, and gives new meaning and new shape to all the other articles of our religion. From this source flow all the distinctive beliefs and practices of the Church, which, though all, or almost all, common to some degree to other religions, have received a specially Christian form and development from this central doctrine. The old Gnostics called the Cross 'horos', the Boundary or Dividing Line. The Gnostics were curious people, but they were right here. On this side of the Cross all history is, or ought to be, a different thing from what it is on the other, and every one who carries the Cross in so far as he carries it, is a better citizen, a better philosopher, and a better man than he would have been otherwise."

It is possible to represent this distinctive Christian line of thought as a somewhat effeminate turning from the manlier purpose of life to dwell with morbid love upon its weaker aspects. To do so is to be false not only to the meaning of Christianity, but also to the facts of history. It is not true that when the Cross has been

preached as the centre of Christianity an effeminate type of character has been produced by it; for, as I hope to show presently, the lesson of the Cross is not a mere lesson of endurance, but a lesson of victorious assertion of the human will over circumstances. But to believe that the Ruler of the Universe is the friend, not of selfishness, but of self-sacrifice; that He fights, not on the side of the big battalions, but on the side of those in whom love is stronger than death, and defeat in the right cause more desirable than victory in the wrong—to believe, in a word, that the picture that Christ gives us of God is true, is to gain a power in life that no other religion has been able to give to its adherents. But more than this, you cannot read the New Testament without feeling that there is a great difference between the view taken by the early Christians of the sufferings of Christ, and the view on which emphasis has been laid in later theology. The early Church did not dissociate, as we are wont to do, the sufferings of Christ from the sufferings of men. Rather they were taught to think that all suffering willingly accepted in the cause of truth was taken up into and made part of the sufferings of Christ. We are to "follow His steps", to "have His mind in us", "to fill up that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ for His Body's sake which is the Church." In a word, men were taught to believe that vicarious sufferings exercised a redeeming power, and became part of that great process by which God was saving the world. This last line of thought was connected with the general view of

life that belongs so distinctively to these early days, when men learned to look upon themselves, not as isolated units, but as members of a society, and were taught to ask themselves no longer "how can I evade suffering?" but "how can I take upon myself the largest share of the sufferings of the world for Christ's sake?" By laying stress, not so much upon the suffering itself as upon the motive and purpose of it, these early Christians protected themselves against the danger, that shows itself so prominently in later Church history, of regarding suffering as having in itself a certain meritorious character; the idea about suffering, that tended at one time to bring Christianity dangerously near to the Hindoo exaltation of its self-mutilating devotees. I said just now that a charge was made against Christianity, that by teaching the virtue of suffering it tended to enfeeble the virility of religion. This would be true if mere suffering itself came to be regarded as a meritorious thing; but if men can be taught to face suffering, not with the mere idea of accumulating merit for themselves, but with the idea of being thereby lifted up into union with the great purpose of Redemption, the outcome of such a challenge is to evoke in man all of true manhood of which he is capable. And so it was because the early Church asked not for joy, but for a share in the sufferings of Christ, that she gained a joy that astonished the world, and flashed upon that jaded age with the glory of a new revelation. You will see then, that the teaching of philosophy about suf-

fering has differed from the teaching of Christianity in that the highest ideal presented to men by philosophy is endurance, while the ideal presented by Christianity has been victory. In the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, in the drama of Job, in the teaching of the Stoics, in the great Eastern religions, the characteristic note is the same; man shows himself greater than the gods in the patient endurance of the worst that the gods can send. His highest call is a call to "the glory of going on", independent alike of the hope of future reward or present alleviation, great, even in his impotence, if he dares to defy that which he cannot dethrone. In the drama of Job this idea mingles with another more characteristic of Hebrew thought. I mean the idea that behind the evil gods that inflict the suffering is a God who allows and will reward. But when we pass from the great world-literature of suffering to Christianity, we are passing into a new atmosphere. Here are the men who have found the power that masters suffering, "the victory that overcometh the world"; by the instinct of faith rather than by the teaching of reason, they have learned to understand that it is better "to endure affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season". They are glad because they believe that what God calls men to suffer is not only designed for the making of their own characters, but also for the good of the world. They were not taught to find the secret of happiness for themselves and to leave the suffering of the world unremedied. This might easily have been the

result of a religion that claimed to teach that suffering fulfilled a purpose of good. But actually has it not been the teaching of Christianity, diffused in the world far beyond the limits of the actual Christian community, that has made men sensitive to the sufferings of others, and eager, not only to explain, but also to remove, the burdens and sorrows of the world?

And yet, when all has been said, it remains true that when we come to face suffering, not merely as a fact in the experience of the world, but a fact that touches our own personal lives, when bereavement and disappointment, and the breaking of our dreams, and the overshadowing of the sunshine of our lives, come to us as a personal challenge and call, then, though much of what I have said to-day lives at the background of our thought, and shines out more clearly as our eyes grow accustomed to the darkness, the first instinctive refuge of those of us who believe in the Gospel of Christ is the refuge of a trust based on what Christ has taught us, and confirmed by the growing experience of life—a trust that finds its deepest utterance in Gethsemane and on Calvary. "Not My will but Thine be done." "Into thy hands I commend My spirit."

THE PROBLEM OF DOUBT

P. V. Smith, LL.D.

The Problem of Doubt, in its bearing on Christianity, may be stated in the form of three questions:—

1. Is the Existence of Doubt fatal to the Christian idea of God?

2. If not, does the existence of Doubt turn the balance against our accepting that idea?

3. If not, what is the right course to adopt in view of the existence of Doubt?

I. The Existence of Doubt is not fatal to the Christian Idea of God.

The difficulty involved in the first question may be stated in this form:—If the acceptance of Christianity is a matter of supreme importance for our eternal welfare, how is it consistent with the character and attributes which Christianity assigns to God—with perfect love and goodness, combined with absolute sovereign power, that He should permit any doubt to exist as to the truth of the facts on which Christianity rests, and the doctrines or inferences to be drawn from those facts? The problem presents a very real difficulty. It would be answered in different ways by the infidel and the agnostic on the one hand and by Christians of different centuries

and different schools of thought on the other hand. The attitude of unbelievers in reference to the question can be conveniently illustrated by a concrete instance. Some thirty years ago I had a correspondence on the subject with an agnostic friend. He objected that if an All-loving and Almighty God had really revealed Himself to men, He would have furnished indisputable proof of the truth of His revelation. He admitted that there was some evidence for the miracles stated in the Gospels to have been wrought by Christ, and for His Resurrection, but not enough to serve as the foundation for a religion. So far as I could understand his position it was that the historical evidence for the miracles and the Resurrection would be sufficient if these events had been of an ordinary nature, and the narratives of their occurrence were corroborated by records of the occurrence of similar events at other periods of human history. But inasmuch as they were unique and unparalleled, the evidence for them must be pronounced insufficient. They could only be accepted on evidence of a far more convincing and indisputable character than was required in the case of other historical events—such for instance as the assassination of Julius Caesar. I ventured to point out that the demand for this stronger evidence of Christ's miracles and Resurrection would be reasonable if they were facts which, or the like of which, might be expected to be repeated and if no tittle of evidence of any such repetition existed. In that case it would be fair to require the strongest

evidence of their having taken place at all. But since, from their nature, the facts of Christ's history, if they ever took place, could only take place once, it did not seem to me reasonable to reject the evidence in their favour, because it lacked the additional support of experience of similar phenomena. To the objection why, if the facts are true and are of all-important interest to mankind, God did not provide that stronger and in fact convincing evidence of their having taken place should be forthcoming for all generations, I urged that to have done so would have involved a greater contradiction to the whole order of the world than anything that was inherent in the facts themselves. This answer was not to my friend's mind satisfactory. He rejoined that from his point of view the position of affairs itself, as stated by me, contained the contradiction that God had sent a message of the highest importance and yet had allowed it to be so lacking in evidence that many persons, including himself, did not accept it. As to my view that the course, which he affirmed that God should have taken, involved a still greater contradiction, he asked, "How can an Almighty Being be reduced to choose between contradictions?" Clearly then, the Problem of Doubt presents to the agnostic mind a serious objection to Christianity. The existence of doubt in reference to the historic evidences for Christianity is to agnostics irreconcilably inconsistent with a recognition of the perfect love and absolute power of God. To their minds it is actually fatal to the idea of God.

What is the true answer to this difficulty? How, if at all, is the question to be rightly solved from the Christian point of view? In the first place it is of primary importance that we should not attempt to minimize or ignore the difficulty. It is idle to evade it by dwelling on man's limited comprehension and knowledge, and on the arrogance of the finite attempting to call in question the infinite. It is not enough to urge, with the prophet, that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways; that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts (Isa. lv. 8, 9). This argument will appeal to the theist but not to the sceptic. He will reply that this is doubtless true if there is a Supreme Being: but that if the Christian's God exists, that is to say a God of perfect love and absolute power, according to our human conceptions of love and power—and we can know no others—His ways may be beyond our understanding, but they cannot be counter to it. They may indicate more love and power than we can comprehend, but they cannot display what our reason compels us to pronounce a want of love or power. And the unbeliever asserts that to leave men in a position in which doubt and uncertainty is possible as regards matters affecting their eternal life and happiness is inconsistent with a combination of perfect love and absolute power. It indicates a defect of love, or of power, or of both. This assertion we are bound to face and do our best to refute. It is a fatal mistake to affirm that on a problem

of this sort reason ought to abdicate her functions and leave the field in undisputed possession of unquestioning faith. Reason is as much the gift of God as faith is; and to decline to use it rightly is to keep laid up in a napkin a talent which has been entrusted to us. No: according to one Apostle, we are to exercise our judgement, our critical powers (1 Cor. x. 15); and according to another, we are to be always ready to give an answer to every man who asks of us a reason, a logical account, of the hope that is in us (1 Pet. iii. 15). If therefore we would satisfactorily meet the objection which arises from the existence of doubt, we must reconcile that existence with the Christian idea of God. If we cannot, since the existence of doubt is indisputable, the Christian idea of God must be rejected. Is then this reconciliation possible? That depends on what is the true Christian conception of the Deity. It is quite a mistake to suppose that one uniform notion of God has been universally prevalent throughout all Christendom from the earliest times until now. Ideas on the subject have varied in different ages and among different Christian bodies and individuals. Probably not two of us have precisely the same views on the subject, if we could accurately compare and analyse them. With many of these ideas I frankly admit that in my opinion it really is impossible to reconcile the existence of doubt. But with many of them also it is impossible to reconcile the present scientific teaching as to the origin and development of the universe and the earth on which we live; and many of

them are no less incompatible with the theological doctrine of the perfect love of God. The existence of doubt, like other facts, physical as well as metaphysical, while on the one hand presenting difficulties in the way of our belief in the existence of God, will, on the other hand, help us to form a true conception of Him and will preserve us from falling into misconceptions as to His nature and character.

In attempting the desired reconciliation it is essential that we should realize clearly the discrepancy which we have to adjust. For this purpose I may quote again from the correspondence to which I have already referred. My agnostic friend regarded the God of Christianity as an arbitrary God who acts as He wills because He wills, and at the same time claims to combine perfect love with omnipotence. My friend was unable to conceive of such a Being leaving His creatures in ignorance or in doubt as to facts which intimately concerned their eternal welfare. The existence of doubt presented to his mind the same objection to Christianity as did the existence of moral evil and of suffering. I suggested that, so far from God being arbitrary, God acts according to fixed laws and a slowly developing plan, laid down by Himself in His own wisdom. He replied:—"I admit that that is a perfectly intelligible theory, but it does not remove the arbitrariness of God. For whence did these fixed laws and the plan come? How did they come to be there and to be laws and a plan by which God works? They must have proceeded from God and therefore have been

originally results of his mere will, which amounts to the same as my theory. If, on the other hand, they did not proceed from God, but were there without his agency and without his permission asked, then God is not the cause and all-controlling author of all things, that is to say, is not the Being whom you contend for. Nor can it be said, as a further argument against the idea of arbitrariness, that God acts in a certain way because that way is the aptest for attaining his ends. For if that way is not absolutely perfect, if there is any particular in which we can conceive it improved, then either God has deliberately preferred worse to better—which at least leaves him arbitrary, or there were obstacles which he was unable to surmount, in which case he is not such a God as you believe in. It seems to me quite clear that the universe is not perfect." And in another letter he said "You tell me of a God who is all benevolence, wisdom and power. Unless I do not care whether I talk mere confusion or not, how can I avoid trying to adjust this idea of God to the facts around me, of which evil is one of the most conspicuous? One is inevitably led to consider how evil can ever have existed if there exists such a God as you believe in?" We are not now discussing the general question of the existence of evil, but I quote this passage because the problems of doubt, suffering, and moral evil, have the feature in common that these three forms of imperfection are alike asserted by unbelievers to be incompatible with the Christian idea of God.

How are we to answer the objection? If the incompatibility really exists, so much the worse for our idea of God; for the presence in the world of doubt, suffering, and moral evil is undeniable. The objection must be answered by showing that it is based upon a misconception of what the idea of God, as presented to us by the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, really implies. The objectors assert that the idea involves infinite Love, infinite Wisdom, and infinite Power. So in a sense it does, to the extent to which our finite reason is capable of apprehending those abstract notions. But it is all-important not to lose sight of this qualification, nor to attempt to overstep it. It is illogical and unreasonable to judge the action of God by the standard of our own intelligence and at the same time to condemn it because it has not produced results which our intelligence is unable to conceive of as possible. My friend in the course of his letters wrote thus:—"It cannot be said that the evil in the world serves a good purpose. It is a confusion of ideas to say that an Almighty Creator permitted evil for a good purpose . . . He does not need to conform to any conditions. As He is Almighty, He is not bound by any conditions. There cannot be any conditions surrounding him which he has not instituted himself, for he is the First Cause of all things. Any end which he desired, therefore, he was able to attain without any concession which included evil. I must hold to the position that the distinction between good and evil is radical, and I could not therefore admit, should

you wish to contend so, that evil is only another form of good and therefore its existence is no proof that the universe is imperfect." And again—"As to the argument drawn from free will, how was God compelled to make men free? He having made them free, the consequences are due to him, not to men." These are familiar objections, but they are open to the charge of violating the caution which I have just mentioned. The objectors (my friend among them) would readily admit that moral excellence, truth, knowledge, certainty, liberty, and on a lower level, physical health and absence from pain, are good things which an All-loving Creator might be expected to provide for his creatures. But if they are asked how they can conceive of the existence of these things, without the existence of their opposites, moral evil, falsehood, ignorance, doubt, coercion, sickness and suffering, they must confess their inability to do so. My friend would reply that although the conception is impossible to us, it would not have been so to God, as presented to us by Christianity; and if He was the perfect Being so presented to us, He was bound to have entertained the conception and carried it into effect. "How," we may remember his asking, "can an Almighty Being be reduced to choose between contradictions?" It is often objected to Christianity that it asks us to believe that facts have occurred which, though not inconceivable, are entirely beyond our ordinary experience and habits of thought; but the objection which we are now considering is based on the assumption that a

state of things is possible which is not only inconceivable but absolutely contrary to the fundamental conceptions of our minds. Such an assumption is unwarrantable. The adoption of it involves a credulity and a contempt of human reason beside which the most extravagant demands on faith ever made in the name of Christianity pale into insignificance. Extremes, as usual, meet; but we are concerned with neither. We do not ask the agnostic to stifle his reason and accept all the legendary facts and metaphysical dogmas which have ever been put forth by Christian authorities. But we claim, on the other hand, that we shall not attempt to stifle our reason, by suggesting that God might or could have done what that reason pronounces to be as intrinsically impossible and contrary to the nature of things as that two and two can make five. We can only argue within the conditions recognizable by our intelligence. When, therefore, my friend asserted that if God is Almighty He is not bound by any conditions, he went too far. My friend cannot ask me to believe, and is convicted of the most extravagant credulity if he himself believes, that any Being, however Almighty, could create other beings at once finite and infinite, at once limited in their knowledge and yet wholly exempt from ignorance and doubt, at once endowed with freedom of will and yet incapable of misusing that freedom.

It must be admitted that the epithets "Almighty" and "Omnipotent" are in part responsible for this confusion of thought. They are not exactly the most happy English and Latin

renderings of the word *παντοκράτωρ*, which is used in the original Greek of the New Testament and which rather means the All-Ruler, the universal Sovereign. There has been also another excuse for the idea that God could, if He had so pleased, have created a world in which man, endowed with the same or even higher powers than he possesses on this planet of ours, could have been free from sin and suffering and liability to doubt. It was not altogether an unnatural idea, in times when God was represented by Christian teachers as a Transcendental, External, Independent Being, who fashioned the universe and all its contents from outside according to His sovereign Will; which was the generally accepted notion when I carried on my correspondence with my friend. If He chose to make it in one way, He might according to that notion just as well have made it in another way. But the modern trend, both of theology and of science, has rendered it far easier to meet this objection. We are now instructed by both these departments of human knowledge, or, if we prefer the term, human speculation—that God is immanent in His universe, as our spirits are in our own bodies; and that the universe with all its parts is not an arbitrary fabrication, called into existence as we see it, or put together piece by piece, by a supreme magician or architect, but is a slow and gradual organic and, in a sense, living growth and development; proceeding and progressing, no doubt, upon a settled plan, but upon a plan inspired from within, and not imposed from without. We have been taught to

recognize that the statements in Scripture as to the manner of creation and the relations between God and His creatures and between spirit and matter are to a great extent poetical, and allegorical, and popular. We perceive that in the state of science prevailing in the times in which they were uttered and recorded it was impossible that they should have been otherwise. Nay, more, we must admit that, even in the present day, with our increased scientific knowledge, we are obliged, in common parlance, to use the very same language, unless we have recourse to what would be regarded as pedantic periphrasis quite unsuited to ordinary conversation. Nevertheless, in such Biblical expressions as—"the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," in the Mosaic account of the creation (Gen. i. 2), and "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28) and "that is not first which is spiritual but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual" (1 Cor. xv. 46) in the speeches and writings of St. Paul, we see signs of a clearer and more scientific perception of the actual structure of the universe. And, in accordance with them we believe that God is not an outside agent who in some remote age brought the universe into existence, and has since watched its progress, from time to time interfering with its different parts and motions as has seemed to Him necessary or expedient. We believe that from the beginning He has been working in and through and by the universe in all its parts and conditions, material, spiritual and moral, as we partially know them and dimly

imagine them. Whether that beginning is separated by a definite or an infinite period of time from our own epoch is a question which it is impossible for human reason to solve. The two alternatives are equally inconceivable to us; just as the ideas of limited and infinite space are alike beyond our intellectual grasp. We can, however, and must conceive that the portion of the universe to which we belong, in the form in which we are now conscious of it, has had a definite beginning, and, for all practical purposes our general belief in the immanence of God in His universe may be particularized into a belief that, throughout the past history of our solar system, He has been working inherently in it, and will continue to do so until its career is closed. We know something of the nature of that working in the past, how progressive it has been, and yet withal how slow, how gradual, how systematic. With my friend we may call it imperfect, and in a sense it is, and must be so; for nothing finite can be absolutely perfect. But to suggest with my friend that, apart from the share which man has had in its making or marring—apart, that is to say, from the existence of moral evil (with which we are not to-night concerned), it might and would have been constructed or developed in a different way, a better or more perfect way, is to suggest that God might and could have been different from what He is—an hypothesis which we have no grounds for making. It is certainly not involved in the Christian conception of His omnipotence.

But when we regard the matter in this light,

we see that the existence of doubt with reference to the truths of Christianity is altogether consistent with the rest of God's development of the universe as we now understand it. Whether absolute certainty on more than very immediate and obvious facts could ever be attainable by a finite intellect is perhaps questionable; but it is at any rate beyond attainment by man as he is at present constituted. In any department of knowledge (unless instruction is received blindly and passively, so that the reason is not called into play in assimilating it), the gradual progress from ignorance to knowledge has always been and must always be accompanied by phases of doubt; and the more we endeavour to dive below the surface into the real essence of things, the more thick and difficult of penetration do the clouds of doubt become. The only fact of which we each of us can be absolutely certain is that he is at present, and has been in the past, conscious of definite sensations, upon which he argues and draws conclusions. But as to the causes of these sensations, and even as to their actual reality, absolute certainty is unattainable, for conclusive proof is impossible. It is impossible for any one of us to obtain irrefragable proof that his fancied life on this earth has not been a dream from beginning to end. Still less can he obtain irrefragable proof of the reality of the phenomena which appear to cause the various sensations which he experiences. We must all of us be satisfied with the strong probability of their reality, which arises from the constancy of the impressions which they produce and the

fact that there appear to be around us beings of a similar nature to ourselves upon whom they appear to produce similar impressions. In like manner we have no absolute and certain knowledge with regard to what things are salutary and beneficial, and what deleterious and destructive to what we know as our terrestrial existence and our terrestrial well-being. As a matter of fact we only learn the truth concerning them gradually, and by long experience; and countless myriads of sad and fatal mistakes have been committed by mankind through ignorance or doubt respecting them. Whether more absolute certainty or the attainment of truth without a gradual course of instruction from a state of ignorance to a state of knowledge, involving as a necessary consequence periods of partial enlightenment and incidental misconceptions and mistakes, is possible for finite beings, may be a matter of speculation. It is at any rate unthinkable to us, and we have therefore no right to assert that it is in the nature of things possible, or that God could have ordained it if He had chosen to do so.

But then it is objected that the history and present condition of the world, including the existence of doubt in the human mind, are inconsistent with the Christian conception of the Infinite Love of God. This objection, so far as it arises from the presence on the earth of pain and suffering and moral evil, has been dealt with in other lectures of the present course. The answer to it, in reference to the existence of doubt, is to be found in similar lines of reasoning.

If Infinite Love can only be conceived of as either ordaining, if that were possible, a condition of absolute unquestionable knowledge for its creatures, such as would completely satisfy the laziest of schoolboys and the most abandoned devotees of an idle hedonism, or, if that be impossible, refraining altogether from the act of creation, then no doubt the actual condition of the human race is inconsistent with Infinite Love. But not so, if we adopt the notion of Love which is consonant with our highest and noblest instincts, and consider it as that which will not shrink from allowing and even inflicting pain and loss, if by so doing some worthier and better result can be obtained. The realization of this idea of the love of God may have been difficult to reflecting minds, while He was regarded as above and apart from His created Universe. But even while He has been so regarded, the difficulty has presented no obstacle to earnest Christians who have experienced something of what the love of God really is. From the purely intellectual point of view, however, the difficulty vanishes when we regard God as immanent in the Universe. For then its imperfections, as we call them, are not matters of indifference to Him, but concern Him intimately. In so far as they involve suffering and loss, He is Himself associated with that suffering and loss; and in so far as He has willed it so to be, or has so willed that this has been the result, He has committed an act of deliberate self-sacrifice. If then self-sacrifice is the highest form which human love can take, we cannot

assert that the self-sacrifice displayed by God in creating the Universe as we know it, is inconsistent with Infinite Love. It is scarcely necessary to add that this aspect of the question is further intensely illuminated by the Christian doctrine of the Divine Sacrifice involved in the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. If He Who lived that life and died that death, as described in the Gospels, was indeed God Incarnate, then it is impossible to accuse God of want of Love for allowing imperfections in which He Himself voluntarily submitted to endure a full share. To what extent Christ, while on earth, was Himself subject to doubt and to imperfection of knowledge is a point on which Christian theologians differ; but He was at any rate subject to all the consequences which the existence of doubt and imperfect knowledge among His fellow men entailed upon Himself as well as upon them.

II. The Existence of Doubt does not turn the Balance against accepting the Christian Idea of God.

The existence of doubt then is not fatal to the Christian conception of God. But does it turn the balance against accepting this conception? It has never deterred men from prosecuting inquiries and advancing in other branches of knowledge. The absence of absolute certainty which lies at the root of our acquaintance with material facts has not hindered the progress of physical science; and men accept its conclusions and act upon them in spite of this initial defect.

It may be urged that the uniformity of our experience with regard to physical phenomena justifies this course. But the same uniformity of experience is certainly not found in other regions in which we base our conduct upon assumption and probability. Not a day passes in which we do not take action, and very often action of most critical and vital import, on the faith of the honesty and truthfulness of our fellow-men. We have not, and cannot have, any certain proof that they will deal honestly by us, or give us true information. We even know as a fact that many men are dishonest, and many more are either wilfully or unconsciously untruthful. Yet to refuse to have any dealings with our fellow-men, or to rely upon what they say, because we cannot be absolutely sure that they are trustworthy, would be fatal to the continuance not only of social but also of individual existence. We trust our fellow-men because we have some evidence of their being worthy to be trusted; but the evidence in any individual case is very far from being indubitable. In like manner the fact of the existence of God and the other teachings of Christianity are not free from doubt; but that is no reason why we should not accept them and act upon them.

Bishop Creighton was once confronted with the objection that there was not as much evidence for Christianity as would suffice to hang a man. He replied that in all the important practical affairs of life we act on evidence which would not be sufficient to hang a man. What

man before he chooses a wife dreams of getting as conclusive evidence of her character as would suffice to hang a man? We know what the result would be if he had the impudence to make the attempt. In fact, in the most momentous issues of our material life, as well as for our apprehension of a spiritual life now and hereafter, we are totally unable to attain certainty, and are compelled by the very nature of things to rely on probability, and act upon trust and in faith. "For" (as the poet says)

> "Nothing worthy proving can be proven
> Nor yet disproven; wherefore be thou wise;
> Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
> And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith."
> (TENNYSON, *The Ancient Sage.*)

But it is sometimes maintained that the history and course of theological belief in the human race shows that this belief stands upon a different footing from our belief and trust in other matters of which we have and can have no positive proof.

The evolution of thought as to the ultimate origin and first cause of the Universe and its contents is brought forward as an argument for discarding the tenet of an intelligent and spiritual Creator of all things. Man, it is said, in his earlier stages of perception and knowledge, assigned a multitude of independent animate causes. The old Greeks, for instance, saw deities and spiritual beings in every movement of nature, and heard them in every sound. By degrees this complex belief was simplified; the number of deities was reduced and their action

was regarded as less immediate and less direct; until at last the monotheistic idea was reached; and the whole universe was regarded as having been brought into being and set in motion by one intelligent Creator as its first cause. All its subsequent developments and all the present phenomena of which we are actually conscious, if we except for the moment those of a purely spiritual nature, can be and are accounted for by secondary causes, having nothing of Deity necessarily inherent in them. Does not, it is asked, the natural development of thought tend to our proceeding still further? We have reduced the idea of a Spiritual First Cause to the smallest possible limit, that of unity, and have relegated it to a remote background in the chain of causation. Is not the next natural and rational step to get rid of it altogether and assign, as it is possible to do, a purely material and physical origin to those phenomena which have hitherto been regarded as spiritual? This is the step which we are invited to take by the materialist and the agnostic. The point in question, they urge, is doubtful; it is incapable of positive proof one way or the other. The reasonable and more scientific course, they say, is to disbelieve, or at any rate withhold belief, in an ultimate intelligent and animated First Cause of the Universe. So far from acquiescing in this line of argument, I entirely repudiate it, and affirm that such a course would be neither reasonable nor scientific. It would be not a progressive, but a retrograde movement on the part of human thought, and would be diame-

trically opposed to the analogy which is to be drawn from the progress of thought and belief in the realm of sense and matter. In that realm, as well as in that of theology, we have advanced from the complex and the manifold to the simple and the unit. From a belief in a vast number of independent creations, independent elements, and independent forces, we have come to regard the whole Universe as composed of different manifestations of a single substance or force; but we do not therefore abandon belief in this single underlying unit. We believe in its existence and we draw inferences about it from its manifestations of which we are conscious. To do otherwise would be to abnegate the powers of thought and reasoning with which we are endowed, and effectually to bar the prospect of attaining to any more perfect knowledge about it. The same principle holds good in the realm of spirit and theology. The crude earlier notions of a multiplicity of divinities have been abandoned, and men's ideas on the subject have been simplified and unified; but that is no reason why we should abandon the monistic idea of the Deity, and deliberately shut the door on one province of human thought and belief. Nor is the imperfection of our knowledge on the subject any valid reason for doing so. Science teaches us that if the primeval worms, or whatever other creatures they were, who first on this earth acquired the sense of sight in its most rudimentary stage, had been, so to speak, agnostics, and had abstained from exercising their nascent visual organs, because these conveyed to them

a mere dim gleam of light—a vague something which produced no definite impression—and were therefore of doubtful utility, the development of those wonderful powers of sight, with which subsequent organisms have been endowed, would have been arrested at the outset. And, similarly, if mankind at any stage of its intellectual development had, in any subject on which thought was exercising itself and endeavouring to obtain further information, allowed doubt to suppress belief and to stop investigation, the result would have been fatal to the advance of human knowledge in that direction. It would have been a deliberate refusal to exercise the intellectual powers which we have at our command, and would have brought in its train the inevitable retribution of disaster. This general law holds good in every other department of knowledge. No reason can be adduced for its not doing so in the case of theology.

III. The Right Course in View of the Existence of Doubt.

The existence of doubt, therefore, is neither fatal to the Christian idea of God, nor a reason why we should decline to give our adhesion to that idea. But it certainly indicates a condition and a limitation of the human intellect, which are not always realized or admitted. It compels us to recognize that absolute certainty, absolute knowledge, absolute infallibility, are unattainable to finite minds. If they were, it is inconceivable that honest seekers after truth, whose moral earnestness in the quest of it has

been above suspicion, and whose mental capacities have been unquestionable, should have failed to come to the same conclusion, and in not a few points should have held diametrically opposite opinions. The fact is that our mental perception, like our bodily senses, is limited, and like them is more acute in one individual than in another. There are scents which a dog can perceive, but which no man can discern; and the sense of smell is not equally keen in all men. There are sounds too shrill to come within the range of the human ear; though one ear can detect some which another cannot. Like our visual power, our mental perception is differently focused in different individuals; and one of us can better apprehend objects at one range and another at another. There are rays above and below the limits of the solar spectrum which are outside the scope of our vision. It is the same with the various rays which go to make up the perfect light of absolute truth. Some are utterly beyond our apprehension, while, as regards those which are within it, our mental capacities are so differently constituted that some of us more readily or even exclusively apprehend the rays of one colour and some those of another hue. For many of us our education or our environment has unconsciously equipped our minds with coloured spectacles, which give a different hue to the light of truth as it passes through them. These reflections need not and should not impair our personal faith. We are bound to exercise to the utmost such faculties as we have, and not to decline to use them

because they are less perfect than they might be. It would be the height of folly and would be fatal to our physical life to allow philosophic doubts as to its reality or continuance, or as to the conditions of its subsistence, to interfere with our obedience to the general laws which are found by experience to conduce to its maintenance. It would be no less foolish and disastrous to allow theological doubt to deprive us of our faith and hinder us in our spiritual advancement.

It was not of doubt such as this that the poet said—

> "There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds."
> (Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, xcv. 3.)

Nor was it of such paralysing doubt that our other philosopher-poet of the last century was thinking when he wrote—

> "What matter though I doubt at every pore,
> Head-doubts, heart-doubts, doubts at my fingers' ends,
> Doubts in the trivial work of every day,
> Doubts at the very bases of my soul
> In the grand moments when she probes herself—
> If finally, I have a life to show
> The thing I did, brought out in evidence
> Against the thing done to me underground
> By hell and all its brood, for aught I know?
> . . . . . .
> All's doubt in me; where's break of faith in this?
> . . . . . .
> With me faith means perpetual unbelief,
> Kept quiet like the snake 'neath Michael's foot
> Who stands calm, just because he feels it writhe."
> (Robert Browning, *Bishop Blougram's Apology*.)

But it is very different when we come to deal

with the beliefs or non-beliefs of others. We must then recognize that the existence of doubt requires us to suspend our judgement upon their opinions. We may think them mistaken. It is right for us to argue with them, and if we can to win them over to our way of thinking; but we must not regard them as reprobates if we fail in our efforts. It would be wrong for us to hold the opinions which they hold; but we dare not condemn them for doing so; and we are bound to remember that different formulas from those which we ourselves accept may be the best possible vehicles of truth to minds which are differently constituted from ours. No two men think exactly alike; nor, if they did, would they clothe their thoughts in precisely the same language. Nor do two minds understand the same words in identically the same sense. The conceptions therefore which we convey to others are not in all respects the same as those which have been formed in our own minds; nor do those which they convey to us correspond in all particulars with the conceptions which they have themselves formed. Two conclusions result from these considerations. First, the notion of infallibility outside the Divine and the Infinite is an idle dream. No human intellect can attain to infallibility, and if it could, it could not infallibly transmit its infallible conceptions to other intellects, so as to be infallibly apprehended by them. And secondly, the Christian Church ought not to impose upon her members, as an intellectual condition of communion, anything beyond the acceptance of the simplest facts of

Christianity. St. Paul reminded his Corinthian converts, that the creed which had been delivered to him, and which he had transmitted to them—the faith wherein they stood and whereby they were saved—consisted of the simple facts that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day (1 Cor. xv. 1–5, comp. xvi. 13). That is the faith spoken of in the Epistle of St. Jude as "once for all delivered to the saints" (ver. 3). The indulgence in further theological speculations is natural and lawful; the formulation of additional doctrines is inevitable and perfectly proper; but it should be distinctly realized that these speculations and doctrines are not of the essence and foundation of the Christian faith. The failure to recognize this, and the consequent insistence on various refinements of doctrine as necessary to be believed by Christians, has not been absolutely fatal to Christianity, nor prevented our holy religion from being an intellectual and spiritual power in the world. But it has been a main cause of the unhappy divisions of Christendom and of the inability of Christianity to achieve far greater results than have as yet been attained. It has fostered scepticism and unbelief to a much greater extent than many of us are aware.

The Problem of Doubt cannot be ignored, but its true solution is to be found, not in a repudiation of the cardinal facts of Christianity, but in wide liberty as to the interpretation of those facts, and as to the theological doctrines involved in them and to be deduced from them.

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